

Rao wins confidence vote

NEW DELHI (AP) — Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao Wednesday survived a no-confidence motion in parliament that accused him of corruption and incompetence. It was the third no-confidence motion Mr. Rao's minority government has defeated since it came to power in June 1991. The victory means Mr. Rao, 72, can continue opening India's closed economy and battling the Hindu extremists who have sparked Hindu-Muslim violence that has killed 3,000 people since 1990. "This is the time to keep our heads cool and concentrate on development," Mr. Rao told legislators in a speech just before the voting took place in Lok Sabha, the lower house of parliament. The vote was 265-251. Eight members abstained. Mr. Rao says he will propose a constitutional amendment that would allow parliament in ban parties or groups that promote religious hatred. Winning candidates who used religious symbols or topics in their campaigns would not be allowed to take seats in federal or state legislatures. The legislation is clearly aimed at the Bharatiya Janata Party, parliament's largest opposition group and Mr. Rao's arch-enemy.

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Israeli strikes displace 500,000

At least 80 killed; Rabin vows to empty all S. Lebanon villages

Combined agency dispatches

A HALF MILLION civilians fled towards Beirut's teeming slums as Israel's jets, warships and guns blasted southern Lebanon for a fourth day Wednesday, creating ghost towns and smashed villages.

Known Lebanese casualties climbed to 84 dead and 382 wounded, police said.

Israeli leaders said Lebanese could live in peace along the border only when the Lebanese government and its Syrian backers stopped resistance fighters from attacking Israeli troops in their self-declared southern Lebanon "security zone."

The Lebanese government warned that the massive exodus of southerners since Sunday could cause large-scale health, hygiene and housing problems.

The government was trying to organise temporary shelters in schools, a spokesman said.

Many of the terrified Lebanese and Palestinians who fled the inferno in South Lebanon with few belongings turned to the Iranian-funded Hizbollah for shelter and food.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin vowed to continue "mercilessly" the air and artillery bombardment of Hizbollah and Palestinian targets until Katyusha

rocketing of northern Israel ceases.

"We are determined to strike the Hizbollah mercilessly, wherever they are, and that is why we are pushing the Lebanese population northwards. Lebanese civilians will only be able to return to their homes when the firing against Israeli communities stops," he told parliament.

Mr. Rabin ruled out compromise and said the options were open.

The army spokesman said Israeli artillery, relentlessly pounding targets to the north, had fired 13,000 shells since Israel launched the offensive Sunday. Air strikes resumed at dawn.

Mr. Rabin spoke after Israeli army radio said a cabinet meeting heard "reports of great satisfaction" by the army on the flight from Lebanese villages.

Army radio announced a pause in shelling in parts of South Lebanon to allow more civilians to flee. Similar warnings were given by a radio station inside the "security zone."

The army said 70 Lebanese villages were under attack, with 20 added as targets Tuesday when Mr. Rabin formally declared his goal of causing a mass exodus from the south.

Israeli helicopters and warplanes staged 47 raids before

nightfall while artillery gunners unleashed about 3,500 shells, security officials said.

They pounded targets around the southern ports of Tyre and Sidon, killing seven people in an attack on two basement shelters and wounding dozens of others.

"This time they (Israelis) are systematically aiming at houses to destroy them. Rabin is a monster," said Ali Mohammad, a father of five who fled the southern village of Shaqra.

Retaliatory rocketing by Hizbollah with more than 160 Katyushas since Sunday has left three Israelis dead and injured 32. At least three salvos were fired Wednesday but caused no casualties.

Israeli officials said 70 per cent of the 23,000 people in the main border settlement of Kiryat Shmona, a favourite rocket target, had moved deeper into Israel out of Katyusha range.

Three Israelis, including a soldier killed inside Lebanon, died in the first three days of the fighting but there were no serious civilian injuries since Sunday.

The Israeli army estimated Lebanese deaths at 100 to 110, of whom 60 were civilians.

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Anxiety and uncertainty amid exodus, page 2



Families crammed in a pick-up truck Wednesday leave their village of Barouryeh to escape the Israeli air raids in South Lebanon (AFP photo)

King voices deep concern over consequence of Israeli actions on peace process

HM outlines confederation concept based on complete Palestinian rights

LONDON (Agencies) — His Majesty King Hussein has expressed deep concern that the Israeli bombardment of Lebanon could have serious adverse consequences on the Middle East peace process.

King Hussein told the London-based newspaper Al Hayat: "The continuation of the violence can only have a negative effect. I hope greatly that these events can be contained quickly and will stop."

Emphasising that there was no alternative to 21-month-old peace process, King Hussein said that the collapse of the peace negotiations would pose extreme danger for Jordan.

"I hope for a quick end to the fighting so it doesn't negatively affect the peace process," the King said.

Asked whether the collapse of the peace process or the disintegration of Iraq would pose the greater threat to Jordan, King Hussein said:

"The collapse of the peace process would be extremely dangerous. The question we always ask ourselves and others is,

what is the alternative? There is no alternative.

"Peace in this sense does not mean surrender, but peace based on reason and logic and the rights of the Palestinians on Palestinian national soil and give all reassurance in this sensitive part of the world."

He added: "The collapse of the situation in Iraq, meaning that it would break up, would also be extremely dangerous because it would mean — God forbid — that we would continue on the path to disintegration."

King Hussein renewed his appeals for fundamental political reform in Iraq.

The King said Jordan was working with the Palestinians towards the restoration of the Palestinian people's rights in their homeland.

Jordan and the Palestinians are also intensifying their search for means that could help fulfill the Arab aspirations, said the King in the interview, conducted by Al Hayat editor Khairallah Khairallah following a meeting with Britain's Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd.

Referring to the proposal for a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation, the King said that the idea was put forth by the two sides with the aim of agreeing on a future relationship.

What should be put to the Jordanian and Palestinian people is the following: Two parliaments, two governments, a central council and a central government, two flags and perhaps a nucleus of a federation of Arab states or a federation of united Arab states," he said.

In a statement released after the King's meeting with Mr. Hurd, the Royal Palace in Amman said:

"During the meeting, His Majesty and Mr. Hurd exchange views on a wide range of issues that are of interest to both the United Kingdom and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, including the latest developments in the region and bilateral relations."

The meeting was attended by the deputy under-secretary of state at the Foreign Office and the Jordanian ambassador in London.

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Arab League calls urgent meeting

Combined agency dispatches

CAIRO — The Arab League Wednesday scheduled an emergency meeting Friday in Damascus on Israel's heaviest assault on Southern Lebanon since its invasion in 1982.

"More than 80 people are known to have been killed and more than 400 wounded in four days of air, artillery and naval attacks."

The emergency ministerial meeting of the 21-member Arab League was scheduled at the request of both Lebanon and Egypt, league spokesman Talaat Hamed said.

On Sunday, the Arab League condemned the Israeli action and urged immediate implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 425, which calls for Israel to withdraw from south Lebanon.

Libya condemned the Israeli attacks against Lebanon and called on the United Nations to implement its Security Council resolutions on Israel "to prevent it from violating continuously the sanctity of the Lebanese territory."

Two other Maghreb countries, Morocco and Algeria, denounced the Israeli attacks and urged the Security Council to take action to

halt them immediately.

Algeria urged the Security Council to "take steps to halt this dangerous situation immediately."

France Wednesday called on Israel to halt its attacks in Lebanon and said the U.N. Security Council was expected to take a public stance on the violence later in the day.

"It (France) warns Israeli authorities against the consequences of this situation both on the stability of Lebanon and on the peace process which risks being compromised," foreign ministry spokesman Richard Duque told reporters.

"At a moment when the toll of innocent victims is increasing seriously, and when the massive exodus of civilians is of a nature to trouble the reconstruction effort of the Lebanese government, France expresses its strongest worry in the face of continuing Israeli raids in Lebanon and demands that they stop."

But Mr. Duque added that France "again underlined the responsibility of armed militias in the escalation of violence."

Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa said the Israeli attacks on Lebanon could torpedo the Middle East peace pro-

cess.

In an interview published in the French daily newspaper Liberation, Mr. Sharaa was asked whether Syria planned to turn its back on the peace process.

He replied: "This will depend both on how the situation evolves, on public opinion in Syria and Lebanon and on the response of the United States as co-sponsor."

He added: "We are not ready to pursue these negotiations under the threat of Israeli cannons."

"This recent aggression against Lebanon can, we believe, torpedo the whole process. It is becoming clear to the international community that Israel does not want peace, whoever is in power," Mr. Sharaa said.

The European Community (EC) called for an end to Israel's military operations in Lebanon and to attacks against Israel from Lebanese territory.

In a statement issued in Brussels, the 12 EC countries called for "an immediate stop to all such actions directed against the sovereignty of Lebanon, its territorial integrity and its independence, and which threaten the peace process."

The statement went on: "The

all too long years of violence and conflict have shown that the use of force and recourse to violence have brought neither a solution nor the prospect of peace for any of the parties involved."

The Twelve called on all parties to show restraint "and to pursue intensively the peace process negotiations, which have reached a crucial phase."

The U.S.-based human rights group Middle East Watch condemned both sides in the conflict in Lebanon for deliberately targeting civilians.

"Israel and guerrillas use 'violating long-established rules of war,' the group charged in a statement calling for an immediate halt to attacks on civilians."

Pakistan said its government and people are "deeply" anguished by the Israeli bombardments in southern Lebanon, a foreign ministry spokesman said.

"These attacks are a flagrant violation of international law, the United Nations Charter and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon," the spokesman said in a statement.

In Damascus, visiting Russian diplomat Viktor Posuvalnyuk met

(Continued on page 10)

U.S. criticises Israeli attacks, urges restraint

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The United States Wednesday criticised Israel directly for the first time for its recent attacks on South Lebanon and said Secretary of State Warren Christopher was in contact with key parties urging a ceasefire.

President Bill Clinton urged all parties in the Middle East, including Israel, to halt the fighting that has swept the area since Sunday.

"I think Hizbollah should stop its attacks, Israel should stop the bombardments," he said at a news conference.

He also said that "Syria should go from showing restraint to being an active participant to try to stop the fighting and we ought to do whatever we can to stop the fighting."

Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Edward Djerejian told Congress that Syria could have some "influence" with Hizbollah, adding that U.S. officials were engaged in very frank discussions with Syrian authorities.

State Department spokesman Mike McCurry also expressed concern that the fighting between Israel and resistance fighters in

South Lebanon held a "potential for further escalation."

"We're extremely concerned about the fighting and the potential for further escalation. We believe the violence should end now. The secretary has been communicating that message directly to leaders in the region including Israel, Syria and Lebanon," Mr. McCurry told reporters.

"We call on the parties to take all necessary steps to end this violence. This includes an end to Israeli air and artillery bombardments and an end to Hizbollah and other — group attacks," he said.

The spokesman said Mr. Christopher "certainly intends to stick with his schedule" of visiting the region next week in an effort to revive stalled Arab-Israeli peace talks.

Mr. Christopher, whom President Clinton abruptly recalled from a trip in Asia, was meeting with Defence Secretary Les Aspin, National Security Advisor Anthony Lake and other top officials Wednesday, according to the State Department.

Violence complicates peace efforts, page 2

Regent urges women to assume active role

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Wednesday called on Jordanian women to play their political role in a decisive and strong manner, saying women in the Kingdom have gained a great deal of education and freedom.

At a meeting held at University of Jordan on the occasion of the launching of the 1993 U.N. Human Development report, Prince Hassan said women occupy an

important place in the political process and stressed that they should fully carry out their national duty since they have gained all their rights in the society.

The Crown Prince expressed hope that structure of the U.N. organisations would be revised and the U.N. Economic Council's role would be activated.

He also voiced hope that the Arab countries would make their voice heard at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and stressed the importance of developing human resources.

"Human beings are not a means to development, but the goal of any development process regardless of age or sex," he said.

The Crown Prince also reiterated calls for establishing an international fund of Zakat (alms for the poor) and dwell on the comprehensive security concept "which requires from all of us to reduce disparities between the rich and the poor."

"He said the Islamic-Christian dialogue focuses on the principle of tolerance, paying special attention to the suffering of the Iraqi children and the situation in Somalia."

He pointed out that 80 per cent of the world's refugees are Muslims and still "we are every day faced with accusations against Muslims of fundamentalism and extremism."

Her Royal Highness Princess Basma delivered an address at the meeting, highlighting the focus by UNDP's report on democracy and public participation in the decision-making process.

(Continued on page 10)

Political parties agree on need to change Election Law but little else

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The agreement reached Tuesday by 15 political parties on the need for "more democratic and modern" Election Law reflected a consensus on demanding fundamental amendments to the legislation but did little to solve the controversy over when and how the changes should be introduced.

Just as Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali gave the strongest indication that his government is moving towards changing the legislation, the country's major political parties sent him a message saying that they agree the law should be reconsidered.

But agreeing on the need for change is the only positive response Dr. Majali received from opponents of amendments, including signatories to the letter.

In the letter, sent to Dr. Majali Tuesday, the political parties said the law "requires reconsideration" through a national dialogue but stressed that no changes should be introduced without the approval of

Parliament.

The changes proposed in the letter include lowering the voting age from 19 to 18, increasing the number of seats at the Lower House, cancelling the quota system for minorities and "redrawing the voting constituencies to ensure equality among all citizens."

The parties also asked for facilitating the voting process, allowing more time for election campaign, holding the ballots under the supervision of judicial committees and cancelling Item E of Article 18 of the law, which bans members of illegal political parties from contesting the ballots.

By pointing to the need for these changes in the law and insisting on a thorough national dialogue before introducing them, opponents of change appear to be playing for time. They aim to prove that there is little time left for discussing the changes if the elections are to be held within their constitutional time.

And by saying that no amendments should be adopted without the agreement of the House, they are calling for holding the coming ballots

under the current law, leaving it to the next Parliament to debate the changes.

"Opponents of the change who signed the letter are betting that time is running out," Mohammad Shraideh, spokesman for the centrist Al Ahd Party, told the Jordan Times Wednesday.

Parties opposed to the change indirectly agree.

"There is only time to mess with the law. You cannot thoroughly assess the changes or have a comprehensive dialogue before the elections are held," said Muslim Brotherhood deputy and leading member of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) Hammam Sa'id.

Even though both Al Ahd and the IAF signed the letter, which was drafted after a meeting organised by the Arab Organisation for Human Rights/Jordan Chapter last week, the two parties differ on the mechanism for the change and who is constitutionally entitled to change the law.

Al Ahd believes that there is enough time for affecting the agreed-upon changes before November, when the ballots are expected to be held, and

that the government has the constitutional right to unilaterally amend the law while the IAF says any change outside Parliament is unconstitutional.

What the two sides agree on however is that Dr. Majali's statement to Salt notables Tuesday that the Election Law "has many gaps in it" is a clear sign that the change is imminent.

In addition to referring to loopholes in the law, Dr. Majali said the national dialogue which His Majesty King Hussein has called for has been going on in the media.

In an interview with the London-based Arabic daily Al Hayat, published Wednesday, King Hussein said the issue of amending the law would be presented to the people "and the suitable decision which will serve democracy will" be taken.

"... before I left Jordan (for London on July 9) I left people the opportunity to discuss the issue among themselves, and when I return (to Jordan) I will handle the subject as necessary and a date for the elections would be decided and

announced," the King said. Dr. Sa'id said the dialogue taking place in the press is not the right forum for debating the law.

"I am not aware of any formal dialogue on the subject, unless one is taking place behind closed doors," he said.

King Hussein has said that the dialogue for amending the law would be similar to the one held when the National Charter was adopted in 1990.

"The government is just continuing its policy of confusing the people and issuing vague statements," said Dr. Sa'id, urging the government to announce a "final and defined position on (the law) and as soon as possible," as demanded by the letter.

Dr. Majali said that no one should object to the change in the law if it aims at ensuring democratic gains, but the IAF believes that "undermining the authority of the House will only hurt democracy."

"We insist that no changes are introduced without the approval of the House. Any other mechanism will be a flagrant infringement on the legislature even if it produces what

we require," said Dr. Sa'id. Any changes in the law, however, are expected to include amendments that the IAF opposes, mainly introducing the one-person-one-vote formula which many observers believe would weaken large and well-organised political groups.

Under the current law, voters have many votes as the number of seats allocated for their constituencies and that allowed large groups, especially the Brotherhood, which was the only party that contested the 1989 elections under party lists, to strike alliance with independent and tribal candidates.

Other signatories to the letter sent to Dr. Majali included: The Jordanian Socialist Arab Ba'ath Party, the Popular Unity Party, the Arab Democratic Party, the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party, the Democratic Arab Islamist Movement Party, the Freedom Party, the Jordanian People's Democratic Party, Al Mustakbal Party, the Jordanian National Alliance Party, the Jordanian Democratic Progressive Party, the Justice and Progress Party and the Democratic Arab Unionist Party.

To Al Ra'i and Jordan Times readers

Home-delivery service in Khaldi and Tla'a Al Ali. Al Ra'i and the Jordan Times will soon start operating a new home-delivery service in the areas of: Tla'a Al Ali, Khaldi, Umm Al Summaq, Wasfi Al Tel Street, Mecca Street and the Seventh Circle. Those who want to subscribe to the service, please call the Distribution Department; Tel: 667171, (Ext. 247).

Lebanon violence complicates peace efforts

By Carol Giacomo
Reuter

WASHINGTON — President Bill Clinton's decision to summon his secretary of state home from Asia for consultations underscores how Middle East violence is again complicating U.S. efforts to advance Arab-Israeli peace talks.

The 20-month-old negotiations are stalled and there are fears the whole process could unravel, although experts discount prospects of a wider war as Syria has hinted.

Total collapse of the talks would exacerbate regional instability and would tarnish immeasurably Mr. Clinton's foreign policy record.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who was originally set to head to the Middle East after meetings in Singapore and Australia, said Tuesday the Australia segment had been scrapped and he would be back in Washington Wednesday.

Mr. Clinton told reporters

he summoned the secretary home "because I want to talk with him about the Middle East before he goes there."

Assistant Secretary of State Edward Djerejian told Congress the gesture "reflects the gravity with which the administration views the outbreak of hostilities."

Mr. Christopher by all accounts intends to go forward with his second peace mission to the region later this week.

The U.S. remains determined to advance the peace process and will not be deterred by these extremist groups who violently oppose peace," Mr. Djerejian told a congressional sub-committee.

But U.S. officials fear the recent fighting in South Lebanon — involving punishing Israeli air and artillery strikes in response to cross-border attacks by the pro-Iranian Hizbollah group could divert attention from the main goal.

"Our concern is that he's not going there to negotiate a ceasefire between Hizbollah and

Israel but to stay focused on the peace process," a senior U.S. official told Reuters.

"The first thing on the agenda is and remains the peace process and moving the parties forward in their dialogue," said the official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Middle East expert Geoffrey Kemp of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace says that like it or not, Mr. Christopher will have to adjust his agenda.

is not markedly different from that faced on many Mideast trips by James Baker, the secretary of state who launched the peace talks between Israel, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinians in October 1991.

In fact, Mr. Kemp said, because the violence occurred in South Lebanon and involved Hizbollah, which opposed peace talks from the start, it should be less problematic.

"Had the violence been in (Israel-occupied) Gaza or the West Bank or Jerusalem it would have been very serious" because it would have involved Palestinians who are central to the negotiations, he said.

"But the fact that primarily it has to do with groups that don't want a peace process (like Hizbollah) makes it easier to isolate it from the peace process," he said.

The administration, while calling for maximum restraint from all sides in the fighting, pointedly did not criticize Israel, its closest Mideast ally.

Officials have repeatedly blamed Hizbollah for trying to undermine peace efforts.

Mr. Clinton, in an unusual gesture on Tuesday, praised Syria, which has 30,000 troops in Lebanon and is the main power broker in the area, for "commendable restraint" in the face of intensified fighting that killed three of its soldiers.

Mr. Kemp accused Mr. Clinton of lauding Syria, which is crucial to Mideast peace talks, for "purely political reasons."

"He knows as well as everybody else that his hand is involved in these attacks... Hizbollah couldn't conduct these operations unless the Syrians permitted it," Mr. Kemp said.

Despite the obvious cloud hanging over the peace process, Mr. Djerejian said the administration remained convinced of the commitment of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad to negotiate peace and still believed there are "real possibilities for breakthroughs in 1993."

Hrawi moves to renovated palace

BEIRUT (AP) — President Elias Hrawi Wednesday moved into the rebuilt presidential palace in suburban Baabda, which had been destroyed in the final throes of Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war.

Ironically, the president moved into the hilltop palace as hundreds of thousands of people fled their homes in South Lebanon, battered by four days of Israeli attacks.

Mr. Hrawi said in a speech that "my heart is bleeding for the thousands upon thousands of South Lebanon's inhabitants who have become homeless as a result of Israel's barbaric attacks on their towns and villages."

He appealed for pan-Arab emergency aid to help ease the plight of the refugees from the south, condemning Israeli attacks as a "brutal offensive aimed at destroying the whole of Lebanon."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Rafsanjani sympathises with Libya's woes

NICOSIA (R) — Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani met a Libyan cabinet minister Tuesday and expressed regret over hardships imposed on Libya by its enemies, Tehran Radio said.

"Arrogant powers plot to create difficulties for revolutionary countries and we hope that these countries can foil the plots through patience and resistance," it quoted Mr. Rafsanjani as telling Libya's Strategic Industries Minister Jaddallah Azouzi Al Telling in Tehran. Mr. Telling relayed Libyan leader Muammar Talhi in Tehran. Mr. Rafsanjani, the radio said. The U.N. Qadafi's greeting to Mr. Rafsanjani in April 1992 after Libya Security Council banned flights to Libya in April 1992 after Libya refused to hand over two suspects in the 1988 bombing of a Pan-Am airliner over Scotland.

Rafsanjani to visit Kazakhstan

NICOSIA (R) — Iran said on Tuesday President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani will visit the former Soviet republic of Kazakhstan "soon" to boost ties between the two states. Iran's IRNA news agency quoted Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati as saying Mr. Rafsanjani would discuss expansion of political, cultural and scientific cooperation in Alma-Ata with President Nursultan Nazarbayev. It gave no specific date. Iranian opposition groups and Western press reports said last year Iran was buying nuclear weapons from Kazakhstan, but the U.S. State Department rejected the reports in October. Kazakhstan, where 40 per cent of the population are Muslims, is Iran's partner in the 12-nation Economic Cooperation Organisation. The two countries have common borders but share the Caspian Sea along with three other former Soviet republics. IRNA said Mr. Velayati was speaking at the opening day of a training course at the Foreign Ministry for seven Kazakh diplomats, the third of its kind held in Tehran.

Gendarmes kill two in Algeria

ALGIERS (R) — Algerian gendarmes shot dead two Muslim activists and wounded a third in an operation to flush out fundamentalists suspected of several killings, the official news agency AFS said Tuesday. It said the operation was mounted Sunday. About 67 members of the security forces and 23 soldiers have been killed in the last seven months in attacks blamed on Muslim activists dedicated to setting up an Islamic republic.

Northern Cyprus may end protection of Nadir

LONDON (AFP) — Northern Cyprus has given its strongest indication to date that it may be prepared to abandon its uncompromising protection of fugitive tycoon Asil Nadir, the Financial Times reported Wednesday. The authorities, with the apparent blessing of the Turkish government, have invited senior officers of the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) to the island without any apparent diplomatic strings. The SFO had argued that it was unable to pursue its investigation on the island because the local authorities and Ankara were insisting on a formal diplomatic exchange. This would have implied British recognition of Turkish sovereignty over northern Cyprus, which E. U. refuses to give. The SFO confirmed late Tuesday that one of its investigating teams travelled to northern Cyprus Tuesday at the "invitation" of the Turkish Cypriot authorities. Nadir, 52, fled Britain on May 4 for his native northern Cyprus, jumping bail of £3.5 million pounds (\$5.25 million) to escape 23 charges of fraud involving his failed conglomerate Polly Peak International. Britain and northern Cyprus have no extradition treaty.

Iran denies links with Turkey's Kurds

NICOSIA (R) — Iran said on Tuesday that it had no links with Turkey's rebel Kurds. An Iranian security official, quoted by Iran's IRNA news agency, denounced Turkish media reports and purported evidence suggesting such links. Gholamhossein Bolandian said officials in Turkey had shown an Iranian delegation two hand grenades marked with the emblem of the Islamic Republic of Iran, saying they had been seized from Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) guerrillas. Mr. Bolandian, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, said Iran did not produce that type of grenade and in any case did not print its emblem. "The Iranian delegation presented their conclusive evidence to Turkish officials and called the action amateurish," IRNA quoted Mr. Bolandian as saying. Turkey's Anatolia news agency said last week Ankara's Foreign Ministry handed documents indicating the presence of PKK fighters in Iran to its Ambassador Mohammad Reza Bagheri and asked Tehran to prevent the PKK from establishing bases there. Mr. Bolandian, according to IRNA, said the Iranian delegation had in turn handed the Turks documents about activities of the opposition Mujahadeen-e-Khalq group and the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan on Turkish soil.

Khamenei assails Armenian raids on Azeris

NICOSIA (R) — Iranian spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei flew to Iran's Azeri heartland Tuesday to condemn Armenian attacks on Azerbaijan and praise Iran's own Azeris for rejecting secessionism.

Huge crowds waving red-white-and-green Iranian flags mobbed Ayatollah Khamenei's car, turning the welcome into a display of support for Iran's Islamic leadership in Tabriz, the main city of Iran's large Azeri community.

Iranian Television gave full coverage to the rare visit a week after a parliament deputy from an Azeri city voiced a long-standing complaint that the central government discriminated against Azeris, even in local appointments.

"The government of Armenia and Karabakh Armenians are oppressing Muslims in this region," the television quoted Ayatollah Khamenei as saying in a speech at a packed stadium.

"We condemn the recent actions Karabakh Armenians have carried out with the support of the Armenian government and we expect the Armenians in our country to likewise denounce the behaviour of Armenians in that

region," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

Armenian forces captured the Azeri town of Agdam last week and were reported to be threatening the southern town of Fizuli in the latest of a series of advances into Azeri territory.

The Armenian government maintains that only Armenians from the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, which is inside Azerbaijan but has a majority population of Armenians, are engaged in fighting Azeri forces.

Ayatollah Khamenei's clear-cut denunciation of Armenia would please Iranian Azeris, many of whom disapprove of Tehran's even-handed stance in the undeclared war over Nagorno-Karabakh which has killed nearly 3,000 people in five years.

Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia were part of Persia until the 19th century when Russia defeated Persian kings in two wars.

Ayatollah Khamenei, whose family is originally from Iranian Azerbaijan, paid tribute to the Azeri community as the "front line of the Iranian nation's defence against aggressors in recent centuries."

"Those who in the past tried to pit ethnic sentiments against Islam and the Koran have now realised that they were mistaken," he said.

"The people of Tabriz and Azerbaijan... have shown by their sacrifice that safeguarding Iran's territorial integrity is one of their most sacred desires," he added.

Iranian Azeris welcomed the Soviet Union's breakup at the end of 1991 and Azerbaijan's independence because it provided freer contact with their kin across the border.

But, to Tehran's relief, Baku's independence has so far failed to kindle a movement for secession among Iranian Azeris to join it and form a big Azeri state.

Lingering discontent was, however, brought into the open last week when Deputy Ebrahim Sarraf criticised the government in a speech for appointing many non-Azeri officials, especially from the central city of Isfahan, in Azeri areas.

The speech drew strong rebukes. Isfahan Deputy Ahmad Salek called it "disgusting" and said: "Raising strong nationalist issues is at odds with the spirit of Islam and the revolution."

Afghan cabinet meets on tension with Tajikistan

KABUL (R) — Afghanistan's cabinet held an emergency meeting Tuesday to discuss a border conflict with Tajik and Russian forces and a Kabul spokesman said Afghan would teach Moscow a lesson if it tried to attack.

"The cabinet discussed the border situation and came to some fruitful decisions," spokesman Ustad Saeed said, adding that the conclusions would be announced Wednesday after approval by President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

A raid on the Tajikistan border from Afghanistan by Tajik rebels two weeks ago killed 100 Tajiks and 25 Russian border guards, who protect the vulnerable frontier under an agreement with the government of the former Soviet Central Asian republic.

Moscow says Afghan troops based in the northern province of Takhar have backed rebel attacks. Afghan officials have accused Russian troops of unprovoked shelling that they say killed or wounded hundreds of villagers and forced thousands to flee.

"Foreign Minister Hidayat Amin Arsalia denied involvement in troubles in the Central Asian republic but said "attacks on our borders are something we

have to protest about very strongly."

"We have to defend our borders," he said.

Mr. Saeed said Afghanistan wanted to resolve the problem through talks, but accused Russia of taking advantage of Kabul's weak government and internal disunity to destabilise the country.

"When there is foreign aggression the Afghans will unite in getting revenge," he said of a cross-border bombardment that has evoked memories on both sides of Moscow's costly 10-year military intervention in Afghanistan.

"If the Afghans are compelled to fight against the Russians they will learn the same lesson we taught them for 10 years," he said. Afghan guerrillas, fighting the former Soviet-backed Kabul government, forced Soviet troops to quit the country in 1989.

Tajikistan Foreign Minister Rashid Alimov on Tuesday invited Russian, Uzbek and Afghan officials to hold talks in mid-August in the Tajik capital Dushanbe to settle the border conflict and discuss the question of Tajik refugees in Afghanistan.

Anger and uncertainty amid mass Lebanese exodus in the heat

By Yasmine Dakik
Agence France Presse

TYRE — They fled out under the burning sun, dragging the remains of what once had been their homes with them: Thousands of cars packed with people fleeing the Israeli bombardment.

Old men, babies, mothers with their children crammed into old jalopies bursting with mattresses, bundles of clothes and pots and pans. They formed part of Tuesday's massive traffic jam stretching along the 45-kilometre coastal road between Tyre and Sidon, in southern Lebanon.

Around 300,000 people have been forced out of their homes in Lebanon by Israeli bombing in "operation accountability" between Sunday and Tuesday. Many of them made their way towards Beirut.

Some of them left because, Israel warned their villages would be razed. Many others saw their homes, and their lives, destroyed before them.

Abu Hassan had managed to

drive only 40 kilometres in five hours of suffocating sunshine. He sat at the wheel of a battered Mercedes, his family and his brother's family stuffed into the passenger's seat, the back seat and even the trunk, where 10 children were jumbled on top of each other under the open lid.

"We left because of the kids. They were terrified by the explosions. I can't even begin to describe the last two days. Even in the (Israeli) invasion in 1982, it wasn't as bad as this," Abu Hassan said.

Mattresses, cushions and strain mats were piled on top of his car, rolled up and tied up. "There is almost nothing left of our village. I don't know where to go. I don't have any relatives in Beirut," he said. "If we have to, we'll become squatters, like so many others."

Raisin-faced old men covered their heads with towels or pieces of cardboard to protect themselves from the sun as they trudged by the side of the road. Some groups had borrowed or hired school buses, capable of transporting many

families, who sat inside sullenly, sweating.

A Lebanese Red Cross ambulance, siren blaring, tried frantically to find a way through the monster snarl-up. Policemen, utterly bewildered by the situation, worked themselves up into a rage.

At some spots, families piled out of their cars and dumped themselves in the shade at the side of the road, waiting for the traffic jam to disappear.

Abu Ali Wazni and his family were sitting under a tree, eating bread and cheese. "God only knows what will happen," he said.

They were headed for Beirut, where Mr. Wazni has cousins, but they were scared their relatives' house would already be overflowing with refugees.

"The Jews are acting like savages and cowards. Neither women nor children are spared," he said. "Luckily the resistance is there to stop them from invading the whole of the south. Otherwise they'd do it in a shot."

"The Israelis say they're de-



A frightened girl embraces her mother as they leave their village in South Lebanon by a pick-up truck to escape the Israeli attacks which started Sunday (AFP photo)

fending themselves against the resistance, but that's a lie. How can they say that when it's them who are occupying our land? We don't leave them, then we'll all leave them alone," adds his sister, Ihsan.

her eyes bloodshot from lack of sleep.

There was even a traffic jam in the opposite direction, containing Lebanese people desperately heading south in search of their relatives in the country.

Raji Attwi, 30, had been stuck on the outskirts of Tyre for several hours. "I haven't heard from my parents since Sunday. I'm trying to get to Tyre to take them to Beirut."

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 Pif et Horcule
17:45 Goal
18:15 Geopolis
18:30 News in French
19:15 Fusion
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Too Close for Comfort
21:10 Quotom Leap
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature film: "Common Ground"

PRAYER TIMES

04:14 Fajr
05:44 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:42 Dhuhr
16:23 'Asr

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Normal summer weather will prevail

Min max. temp.
Amman 18 / 31
Aqaba 25 / 38
Deserts 17 / 33
Jordan Valley 22 / 37

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 31, Aqaba 38. Humidity readings: Amman 37 per cent, Aqaba 22 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Rashed Zeinoun 889685
Dr. Yousef Rashed 896301
Dr. Farouq Nouz 786080
Dr. Hisham Kana'an 896301
First pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Nairookh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636720
Yacoub pharmacy 640945
Shahin pharmacy 637660
778332

TEL AVIV:
Dr. Nohumndai Al Zu'bi (—)
Al Ouds pharmacy 856151

EMERGENCIES

Civil Defence Department 661111

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381/332
Khaldi Maternity, J. Amn 64281/6
Alkhalq Maternity, J. Amn 64241/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malinas, J. Amman 636140
Al-Ahli, Abadi 6641714
Palestine, Shamsi 669131
Shamsi Hospital 845845
University Hospital 66127/9
Al-Muasher Hospital 66612/7
The Islamic, Abadi 66614/6
Al-Ahli, Abadi 77101/2
Jalalin, Al-Mulajjoun 77101/2
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 77111/2
Army, Marka 89161/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674135

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al-Hussein Hospital (09)999090

PRINCESS BASMA HOSPITAL (02)275555
Palestine, Shamsi (02)272725
Ibn Al-Nafies Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport. Tel: (06)52200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:00	Sana'a (RJ)
05:30	Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
06:45	New Delhi (RJ)
09:15	Riyadh (RJ)
10:15	Dhahran (RJ)
10:30	Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:55	Cairo, Aqaba (RJ)
11:00	Colombo (RJ)
11:30	Larnaca (RJ)
12:30	New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
19:00	Abu Dhabi (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

13:00	Amman (TK)
13:30	Abu Dhabi, Muscat (GF)
14:00	Riyadh (SU)
16:45	Rome (AZ)
20:35	Cairo (MS)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

07:00	Beirut (RJ)
12:00	Rome (RJ)
12:05	Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
12:15	Montréal, Toronto (RJ)
13:00	Larnaca (RJ)
13:05	Paris (RJ)
13:15	Athens (RJ)
21:30	London (RJ)
21:30	Madrid (RJ)
21:45	Jeddah (RJ)
22:45	Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
23:00	Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
23:45	Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:55	Damascus, Paris (AF)
07:05	Larnaca (CY)
09:15	Beirut (ME)
12:15	Larnaca, Vienna (OS)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in lbs per kg.

Apple	300/320
Apricots	400/450
Bananas	680 / 690
Banana (Mukammur)	620 / 630
Beans	520 / 530
Cauliflower	100 / 120
Carrot	260/270
Cherry (red)	750/800
Cucumbers (large)	100 / 120
Cucumbers (small)	170 / 120
Eggplant	700 / 580
Garlic	300/320
Grapes	580 / 480
Leamon	150 / 100
Marrow (large)	230 / 240
Marrow (small)	190 / 200
Mint	400/420
Okra	140 / 70
Onion (dry)	60/70
Orange	300/320
Peas (boil)	300 / 250
Pepper (sweet)	300 / 220
Potato	230 / 150
Tomato	120 / 60
Watermelon	240/250
Watermelon	140/60

Ministry reshuffles governorships

Regent urges officials on open neutrality

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Interior Ministry Wednesday announced a reshuffle of some governorships and the appointment of new governors and district governors in various regions of the country.

A statement quoted by Petra said a Royal decree has approved a decision by Interior Minister Salameh Hammad to appoint the following persons as governors at the Ministry of Interior: Abdul Odeh Eid Hababeh, Misleh Tarawneh, Khalaf Mahasneh, Ahmad Lawzi, Qafan Majali and Mohammad Shawabkeh.

Mr. Shawabkeh was seconded to temporarily serve as an advisor at the Prime Ministry.

Talaat Nawaisheh, the governor of Zarqa, has been appointed governor of Amman to succeed Issa Al Omari who was retired last week.

Misleh Tarawneh was appointed as governor of Zarqa. Khalaf Mahasneh is governor of Karak, Ahmad Lawzi governor of Tafleh and Qafan Majali governor of Mafrq.

The list also contains the names of district governors posted to new areas.

Later at a meeting following the swearing-in ceremony at the Royal Court, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, urged the newly-appointed governors to seek the path of integrity and neutrality in dealing with various issues and to serve in an exemplary manner trying to ensure food and security for the community.

The regent called on the officials to provide opportunities for open and responsible discussions with the members of the public,

noting that respect for government can only be won through the credibility of its officials.

Urging them to interact with the local community, the Regent said the governor's home should be home to all members of the community, and governors should act in a manner reflecting His Majesty King Hussein's confidence in them.

Prince Hassan cautioned the governors to rely on accurate information and to define priorities in public service.

He said they ought to follow up on the issues of concern to the community searching for the actual needs of people.

The swearing-in ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali, Interior Minister Salameh Hammad and other senior officials.



MRS. CETIN VISITS YWMA WORKSHOP: Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Monday received Mrs. Cetin, wife of the Turkish foreign minister, and discussed possible cooperation between Jordan and Turkey in the field of services for the handicapped. Mrs. Cetin had earlier visited the Sheltered Workshop in Sahab, a project of the Young Women's Muslim Association (YMWMA) which is chaired by Princess Sarvath. The Workshop was set up in 1987 as an extension of the services offered by the YWMA School for the Mentally Handicapped in Busayf, to provide training and employment for the graduates of the school and other handicapped young people. The Sheltered Workshop has been designated by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) as a model in the Middle East region. It has received trainees from and provided consultants to several Arab countries, including Oman, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Lebanon. Mrs. Cetin was accompanied by the wives of the Jordanian minister of state for foreign affairs, Turkey's ambassador to Jordan and Jordan's ambassador to Turkey. (Photo by Boghos)



Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali Wednesday addresses a seminar on vocational training at the teachers club in Amman (Petra photo)

Majali says a manpower agency would provide workers with security

Premier urges VTC to focus on quality

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali Wednesday proposed the creation of a manpower organisation, jointly operated by the public and private sectors and catering to the needs of the labour market in Jordan and neighbouring Arab countries and urged the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) to focus on quality.

Addressing an ongoing seminar on vocational training in Jordan, held at the Teachers Club in Amman, the prime minister said the government would fully back the creation of such an organisation.

Dr. Majali explained that all types of workers would be affiliated to the agency including college graduates who obtain vocational training at the Vocational Training Corporation.

Such an organisation, he added, would be referred to in order to assist skilled workers here and abroad, when they are in need. Dr. Majali said it would also help reduce the rate of unemployment and enable workers to feel protected and secure as they will be a part of a national institution that watches over their affairs under all circumstances and difficult situations like that which Jordan faced after the Gulf crisis.

Referring to the VTC, which provides training in different trades, Dr. Majali said its efforts are appreciated, but the government would like to see the VTC focusing attention on quality rather than quantity.

The VTC is called on, along with the other concerned parties, to monitor the needs of labour markets in neighbouring states so that training programmes could be tailored accordingly and ensure work for Jordanians abroad, said the prime minister.

Referring to the guest workers employed in Jordan, Dr. Majali said the Kingdom has been trying

to deal with this problem without too much rigour and without prejudice, adding that skill and efficiency are required and serve as a criteria in employment.

Labour Minister Khaled Al Ghazawi outlined the VTC's programmes, which started in the mid 1970s.

VTC Director General Ahmad Atwan told the meeting that the corporation centres have so far provided training to 75,754 male and female trainees.

In its efforts, the VTC has been helped by at least 3,600 employers who have provided on-the-job training opportunities to VTC trainees, said Dr. Atwan.

In the 1993-97 five-year plan, he added, VTC is looking towards vertical and horizontal expansion.

But he noted that financial difficulties always hinder the implementation of the corporation's schemes.

Trade minister meets Arab agricultural official

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Industry and Trade Bassam Al Saket Wednesday received Director General of the Arab Organisation of Agricultural Development Yahya Bakour and discussed with him the agenda of the organisation's next meeting, the date of which will be decided by the Arab Economic and Social Council next

September. Dr. Saket reiterated Jordan's continued support for the activities of the various Arab organisations with the objective of achieving Arab integration in various fields. He also voiced Jordan's appreciation of efforts exerted by the organisation to support Arab agricultural integration.

Phosphate industry confident of market share despite losses from U.N. ship inspections

AMMAN (Petra) — As the U.N. embargo on Iraq continues to negatively affect Jordan, the Kingdom's phosphate industry works to keep its share of the export market.

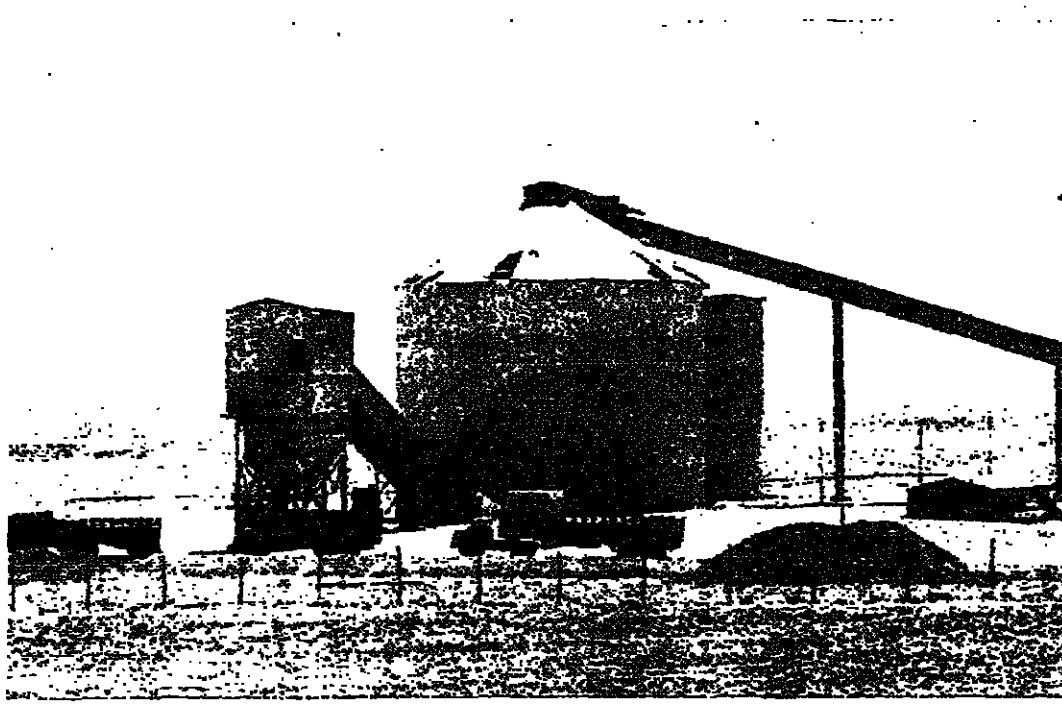
The United Nations-imposed blockade on Aqaba has had severe consequences on Jordan's phosphate exports since 1990 because of a decline in the number of vessels docking at the harbour, said Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) Director General Thabet Al Taher Wednesday.

Ship owners are shunning Aqaba because of the interception and search of ships heading to the port, which causes delays and extra expenses, said Mr. Taher.

Forty-one firms used to operate through Aqaba before the Gulf crisis, but today that number has dropped to 20, he said.

At the same time, the total world exports of phosphate have dropped; and this year the amount is not expected to rise above 24 million tonnes down from 29 million tonnes a year ago, Mr. Taher explained.

Despite the general decline in exports, Mr. Taher said JPMC is confident of keeping its share of world markets which has been



Two 20,000 tonne silos hold dry product phosphate at the Wadi El Abiad mine. Jordan is the world's second largest exporter of phosphates (File photo)

"The international trend is to buy finished fertilisers rather than raw materials," said Mr. Taher. The Kingdom has edged out the United States to become the world's second largest exporter of phosphates, after Morocco. The main markets for Jordanian phosphates are India and other Asian nations because of the freight advantage of Jordan's Red Sea port of Aqaba.

fluctuating since 1989 when it was 14.5 per cent. In 1990, it fell to 13.2 per cent, and rose to 13.6 per cent in 1991, he added.

But, Mr. Taher said, the JPMC would be ready to export more and acquire a larger share of the world's market if the number of vessels carrying its phosphate would return to normal.

At present, plans are underway for boosting production and manufacturing more phosphate-based fertilisers.

The Associated Press adds:

that the Kingdom, the world's second largest exporter of phosphates, has changed its strategy as demand has shifted to finished fertilisers from the raw material. A \$150 million plant with a capacity of 200,000 metric tonnes of phosphoric acid a year is under construction. Meanwhile, a Mitsubishi-led consortium of four Japanese companies has committed to a 60 per cent share of \$360 million, 300,000 metric tonne fertiliser plant.

Both facilities will export their entire production, said Mr. Taher.

Discussions with Pakistan on setting up a similar joint venture are continuing.

Environmental workshop to open for youth leaders

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Society For The Control Of Environmental Pollution in cooperation with the German Friedrich-Naumann Foundation is organising a one-week environmental workshop for youth leaders from Aug. 1-6 at Crown Hotel, Amman.

Representing the Ministry of Youth, political parties, public and private universities, the Arab Youth Forum (AYF), and the media, 40 participants will be expanded to local, regional and global environmental problems.

The workshop aims to increase awareness and knowledge and to activate the youth in the field of environmental protection in Jordan.

The one week intensive programme will tackle different topics such as environmental policies, man and nature, the local and global state of environment, environment and population growth, traffic and environment, water management and rain harvesting, agriculture and environment, natural resources and biodiversity in Jordan, solid and liquid waste in Jordan, environment and industry and trade.

Case studies will be presented to participants on the chlorine factory in Jordan, the triangle of pollution "Khirbet Al Samra. The Refinery and The Power Station," the ozone layer depletion, Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska and the Bhopal factory in India and Chernobyl.

Participants will be divided into working groups to find solutions to problems presented.

The programme includes two field trips to Maqar, Azraq, Shomari and Russeifa dumping site, Khirbet Al Samra treatment plant and the refinery.

Information usage is weak — expert

By Samir Shafiq
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The proper usage of information in Jordan lacks the seriousness it should carry and, as such, the utmost utilisation of this vital resource remains weak.

Youssef Nusseir told a recent economic symposium in Amman.

Dr. Nusseir, acting director-general of the National Information Centre (NIC), also said that there was still a lack of qualified manpower in the area of "information network management at the national level" in addition to a lack of specialists in ensuring safe and secure transmittal of information.

The NIC chief pointed out that before setting up the centre in 1992, as one of the specialised scientific and technological research centres affiliated to the Higher Council for Science and Technology, there was no coordination among the information centres in the country as the sector had been developing on individual efforts and was being shaped according to personal and independent evaluations.

The absence of a national information policy "reflects the discord, disharmony and even non-cooperation among various information centres, in addition to unspecified roles within the overall national set-up in this sector."

According to Dr. Nusseir, Jordan has a good infrastructure for the information technology sector and many information centres and leading libraries do not lack the equipment and machinery to implement an automatic information system.

However, he said, the automation in the information field was very limited, and there were still obstacles in providing suitable programmes to the operations, in addition to the cost and effort needed to feed in, revise, edit and correct the information.

Dr. Nusseir stressed that training in the information sector was adequately available at various educational levels and was a reflection of qualified labour capabilities in the Kingdom but, he pointed out, the distribution of qualified personnel should be examined as the public sector somewhat lacks the right cadre in the information field.

Other elements mentioned to be hampering the progress of information science in Jordan were:

- Insufficient financial capabilities to develop and upgrade information sources.
- Ineffectiveness of registering and controlling the bibliographical process to publish and distribute local intellectual material, especially scientific thought.
- Difficulty in implementing the issue of writing and publishing rights.

15 Somalis still stranded after 3 years in Jordan

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

Jordan had high hopes that a European or North American country would accept their request for political asylum.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which has given them refugee status, says it is a victim of its own rules and regulations and pleads helplessness.

"We cannot pursue their case anymore since three countries have already turned down their application for resettlement," said Fawzi Abdul Majeed, a senior UNHCR official at the agency's mission in Amman.

"Our rules say that no more asylum requests could be entertained from anyone whose application have already been turned down three times," he explained.

"The choice the Somalis have now is voluntary repatriation to their country of origin, but it is not immediately possible in view of the situation in Somalia," Dr. Abdul Majeed told the Jordan Times.

"Our own office in Somalia has been moved to Kenya" in view of the instability in the country, he noted. "How can we send anyone to a country where we ourselves are not present because of instability?"

The refugees — nine of them housed in a camp near Aqaba and six of them in Amman — would like to go to Sudan or Ethiopia and take their chances from there.

"We spent three years in Jordan in uncertainty and tension," said Abdul Kader Ali, one of the 15. "We cannot live like this anymore, and would like to go anywhere else to take our chances."

But, UNHCR cannot offer them air passage since its rules bar sending rejected refugees to any country other than his or her own. At the same time, it will not resort to forced repatriation either.

In any case, Jordan is a strict adherent of the international convention of refugees which stipulates that no one will be sent out of the country to a destination where his or her life could be in danger or he or she faces persecution.

Dr. Abdul Majeed said he met with six of the Somali refugees and agreed with them that their applications to leave Jordan would be referred to UNHCR headquarters in Geneva for approval.

The meeting followed a small protest staged by the Somalis after three of their compatriots who came from Aqaba and went to the UNHCR office without permission from the Jordanian authorities in charge of their camp in Aqaba, he said.

"I explained our difficulties to them, and promised them to do what we could within the limitations imposed on us," said Dr. Abdul Majeed.

"If the headquarters approve, then we have no problems to send them to Sudan or any other country which will take them without a visa and prior approval," he told the Jordan Times.

The UNHCR mission has processed tens of thousands of applications in the past three years and has arranged refuge for many of them.

It still has under its care around 120 applications, including Bosnians, Iraqis and others.

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Turkish minister ends visit**
AMMAN (Petra) — Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin and the accompanying delegation Wednesday wound up a three-day visit to Jordan and left home after meetings with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali and senior Jordanian officials. Mr. Cetin's talks in Amman focused on regional and international issues, namely the Middle East peace process, bilateral relations and ways of enhancing them. Mr. Cetin and the accompanying delegation visited several places of historical and archaeological importance in Jordan. The Turkish official was seen off at the airport by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan and several officials.
- Jordan, Qatar review health cooperation**
AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Health Abdul Rahim Malhas Wednesday discussed with the Qatari Ambassador in Amman scopes of cooperation between Qatar and Jordan in health fields. Dr. Malhas and the Qatari envoy also reviewed ways to enhance cooperation between the two countries.
- Russian official to visit**
AMMAN (Petra) — Director of the Middle East and Africa Department at the Russian Foreign Ministry Victor Valuyok will arrive in Amman from Damascus Friday on a several-day visit to Jordan, during which he will hold talks with senior Jordanian officials on bilateral relations and issues of common interest. The Russian official's visit to Jordan comes as part of a regional tour.
- JEA to hold 7th architectural week**
AMMAN (Petra) — Under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, the Jordan Engineers Association (JEA) will Thursday organise the seventh annual Architectural Week at the Professional Associations' Complex in Amman. The event will include an exhibition of books and periodicals on architecture, a poster competition, a photography competition, a three day seminar and other activities.
- Transport union seeks ministry arbitration**
AMMAN (Petra) — The General Union of Workers in Land Transport and Mechanics Wednesday urged the Ministry of Labour to interfere in a dispute between the union and the board of directors of the Iraq-Jordanian Land Transport Company. The union called for referring demands by drivers working in the company to the ministry's arbitrator to take all legal procedures in accordance with the Jordanian Labour Law. Union President Ibrahim Al Ajameh said he sent a memorandum to Labour Minister Ibrahim Ghazawi in which he explained that the dispute was referred to the ministry because both sides did not reach an agreement on the issue. Mr. Ajameh said the drivers in the company are demanding that the company re-introduce the tipping system, include them and their families in a health insurance plan and a provident's fund, grant them allowances and overtime payments, in addition to other demands. The company, the biggest land transport company in the Middle East, employs 400 drivers.
- WHAT'S GOING ON**
EXHIBITIONS
 - ★ "ACOR at 25," in celebration of 25 years of archaeological research in Jordan, at the American Center of Oriental Research.
 - ★ Art exhibition by Syrian artist Sakhr Farzat at the Balqa Art Gallery, Fuhes City.
 - ★ Exhibition of a new collection of art works by Princess Wijdan Ali at The Gallery, Hotel Jordan InterContinental.
 - ★ Exhibition of paintings and ceramics by Ali Al Mi'mar, Hazem Al Zu'bi, Abdul Raouf Sham'un and Jalal Ureigat at Eshbeelia Art Gallery, 6th Circle, Amra Shopping Centre.
 - ★ Art exhibition by Rana Dia and Mohammad Kadoumi at the Royal Cultural Centre.
 - ★ Exhibition of British Archaeological projects in Jordan at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- FIELD TRIP**
 - ★ Field trip, organised on Friday by the Friends of Archaeology, to Umm Al Jimal, near Mafrq, Departure, in bus or in private cars, will be at 8 a.m. from the Amra Hotel parking lot.
- PANEL**
 - ★ Panel discussion by the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) on the repercussions of the closure of the West Bank and the isolation of Jerusalem, at the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at 1.30 p.m.
- JERASH FESTIVAL**
 - ★ Concert by Algerian Rai singer Cheb Khaled at the South Theatre of Jerash on Thursday and Friday at 8.30 p.m.
 - ★ Performance by the Lebanese troupe Caracalla at the Palace of Culture, Al Hussein Youth City on Thursday and Friday at 8.30 p.m.
 - ★ Children's play entitled "Who Will Save the Earth?" on Thursday and Friday at the Royal Cultural Centre at 6 p.m.

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Good news from Yemen

MOHAMMAD BASSANDAWA, the Yemeni foreign minister, was upbeat after his recent visit to Saudi Arabia. He had reported that King Fahd made him feel very optimistic about the prospects of Arab reconciliation. That indeed is good news. One, because King Fahd is key to an Arab reconciliation drive and two, because if Yemen and Saudi Arabia could bury their differences and restore normal ties after the rift created by the Gulf crisis, then that might be the first step in a process that every Arab hopes would restore to the Arab World its pre-1990 cohesion. Much, of course, needs to be done to achieve such an aspired-to goal. The rift has been so wide and suspicions have run so deep. No one could deny the trauma inflicted on the nation by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August, 1990. By now every Arab leadership and Arab people have felt the consequences of that blunder. Jordanians, Palestinians, Saudis, Gulf Arabs, Egyptians and Yemenis were among those who suffered.

But by far the Kuwaitis and Iraqis are the main victims. And they were not the victims of their own deeds. Rather they were victimised by their leaderships and their leaders' miscalculations.

We, of course, do not expect quick fixes. The situation in the Arab World requires a new era that would still have to address the grievances that led to the Gulf crisis and war. These include a unified Arab position to confront the challenges of the post-cold war era, the threat of radicalism, the ambitions of neighbours and a fair distribution of wealth.

Of urgency is a unified Arab stand to deal with the intricacies of the current peace process. The Arab parties to the process need the backing of a unified Arab front to make bargaining more beneficial to the Arab and Palestinian sides. The Arab leaders, especially the Saudi leadership, are duty-bound, to their people and history, to put their differences aside and place the interests of the nation above all other interests.

With a collective stand, the Arab peoples can extract a better deal in Palestine, in the world oil market and in the new world order. Political, social and economic problems can only be addressed through cooperation, and examples abound. Division will only bring weakness. And we are hopeful that sensible and wise Arab leaders will seek the ultimate interests of the nation. Mr. Bassandawa's optimism is therefore good news indeed.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE FORMER U.S. Secretary of state, James Baker, used to complain that every time he was about to visit Tel Aviv, in the course of a tour of the Middle East, the Israelis would receive him by announcing new plans for more Jewish settlements in the occupied Arab lands, said the local daily Al Ra'i Wednesday. These days, the present secretary of state, Warren Christopher, is preparing to make a tour of the region and the Israelis are showering Lebanon with rockets and shells and declaring that their war on Lebanon will not end until they have dismantled the resistance groups found in the south, said the daily. The paper said that with this new aggression, it is difficult to speak about any peace process in the region. What the Israelis are doing now, said the daily, is a total disregard of the peace process of those sponsoring the peace process and the other parties involved in it, continued the paper. It said the world's major powers have a special responsibility towards stemming Israel's aggression on the Arab countries and towards paving the ground for peace. The first step in this direction, added the paper, lies in allowing the U.N. Security Council to deal with the issue and stop the aggression immediately and then force the Israelis to implement Resolution 425 of 1978, which provides for an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory, demanded the paper. However, the Israelis do not count on Mr. Christopher's visit to achieve any solution now that they have exposed their real intentions and evil designs, added the paper. It said that while the aggression continues there can be no chance for any peace.

THIS TIME the Israeli aggression on Lebanon is of a different nature since the victim is prohibited to lodge a complaint with the U.N. Security Council, said a columnist in Al Dustour. As soon as Lebanon complained to the Security Council, Washington barred any meeting on the part of the council members to deal with the dangerous situation in the Middle East, said Mohammad Kawash. He said that Washington took this step under the pretext that a council meeting could endanger the peace process. Lebanon and the Arab World at large have no power to say anything because of the continuous inter-Arab divisions and differences and the absence of Arab solidarity, said the writer. Under the so-called new world order, Israel is being given free hand to demolish villages and expand its occupied territories in South Lebanon at will. Of course, it is being backed in this aggression by the United States which sponsors the peace process, he added. The United States is blaming Syria and Iran for the aggression in order to escape the wrath of the Arab masses and to force the Arab parties to the peace process to accept Israel's conditions.

Governments should help workers get smart

By Robert B. Reich

WASHINGTON — Throughout the industrialised world there seem to be too few good jobs to go around. The problem manifests itself differently in different countries, but the failure of any to ensure good jobs for many able and willing citizens raises a troubling question: Do advanced nations have to choose between good jobs and more jobs?

In the last two decades western Europe has had growth in wages but stagnation in employment. From 1975 to 1992 the real (inflation-adjusted) average wages of manufacturing workers in France, Germany, Italy and Britain grew by 30 to 50 per cent, but unemployment in European industrialised economies has risen by close to a staggering 11 per cent.

How does the United States compare? On the narrow score of the number of jobs, we rank quite well. Since 1975, our economy has generated nearly 2 million new jobs per year. And although our current unemployment rate of 7 per cent is disturbing, more than 800,000 jobs have been created since January, as economic growth has begun to stir.

Our bigger long-term problem is creating jobs that pay well. The average wages of America's production workers, adjusted for inflation, are the lowest they have been since 1967. Eighteen per cent of full-time workers do not earn enough to keep a family of four out of poverty; this level is up from 12 per cent in 1979. And more Americans who want full-time jobs are working part-time instead.

Wages and incomes in America have become more unequal since the early 1970s. They have risen for upper-income workers, remained stagnant for the middle class and fallen for those at the bottom. In no other advanced industrialised nation is the income gap so wide between the managers and professionals and the production workers.

Must we accept a diabolical trade-off between good jobs and more jobs as factories move to places around the world where labour costs less, and as smart machines take on more tasks at home? I believe that a trade-off is not inevitable if we draw the right conclusion from the underlying employment trends.

The pattern of wage inequality in the United States provides an important clue. From 1980 to 1991 the weekly real earnings of full-time workers above the age of 25 who had graduated from college rose by 9 per cent. That's not so bad. But the real weekly earnings of similar workers who had only completed high school dropped by 7 per cent. And

similar workers without high school diplomas suffered a drop in earnings of 14 per cent.

Today the weekly earnings of American full-time workers above 25 who are college graduates are more than 50 per cent above the earnings of otherwise similar workers who are simply high school graduates.

The pattern of unemployment provides a second clue. In Europe and the United States, the uneducated and unskilled have been hardest hit. While college graduates did not escape the prolonged recession in the United States, only 3.2 per cent were unemployed last year compared with 11.4 per cent of those who dropped out of high school.

The long-term crisis in advanced industrial nations reflects in part a shift in relative labour demand against less-educated workers and those doing routine tasks and towards workers with problem-solving skills.

So, how do we move a work force suited to one sort of economy quickly and smoothly into a world grown suddenly quite different? No country has yet found the formula. But different countries have illustrated different ways to get it wrong.

The continental European approach has been to have government intervene heavily in the wage-setting process and seek to preserve the existing pattern of employment. This has prevented the gap between high-wage and low-wage workers from widening much, but it has not directly addressed the profound changes in the demand for skills. Such policies have maintained wages and job security for the employed, but they have retarded the creation of new jobs.

In the United States and Britain, employers have responded more directly to changes in labour force supply and demand. The result has been greater inequality in wages and working conditions. The apparent payoff from this Faustian bargain is a rate of U.S. job growth in the last two decades that has been the envy of Europe. Nevertheless, job growth in the United States and Britain has been punctuated by high unemployment in recessions and tarnished by worsening problems of permanent loss of jobs.

A third blind alley is protection from exports. No advanced nation is blameless. Yet escaping from global markets through protectionism is no solution. New technologies will reduce the demand for less-skilled workers even if borders are sealed. And many of the high-wage jobs of the future will be tied to exports and

jobs that service the export industry. Protectionism cripples economic progress while failing to save jobs.

Americans have traditionally cast their lot with open trade. In recent years we have wavered. But in Tokyo, President Bill Clinton led the Group of Seven industrialised countries another major step down the path of openness. The trade agreement initiated there has sharply improved the odds for a new global accord. The president also established ground rules for measuring how far Japan opens its market.

The odds of advanced nations adapting to a changing world are higher than they were before the summit meeting, holding hope for America's own economic recovery.

In addition, the president's proposed sharp reduction in the budget deficit will remove a significant source of uncertainty about the stability of the world economy and aid recovery. A strong commitment to fiscal expansion in Japan and monetary easing in Europe could also help job growth in America.

But domestic policies are also needed to deal with the mismatch between the skills Americans have and the skills the economy requires. Here are five: a good basic education for all children; affordable college; school-to-work apprenticeships for young people who do not go on to college; transition help to new jobs for displaced workers; lifetime learning in the workplace.

This list essentially describes the Clinton agenda for the work force. Some parts of it are already embodied in legislative initiative; others are still taking shape. The imperative of investment in the work force is so compelling and the goal of building America's skill base so broadly shared that the debate remains remarkably free of partisan wrangling.

The closing years of this century and the start of the next will be dominated by the advanced countries' efforts to adapt to the new economy. America enters this era with advantages. Our still enormous wealth gives us scope for experimentation and a margin for error. Economic dynamism and openness to change are woven deep into our culture.

Our greatest weakness has been the failure to invest adequately in our own learning. In the emerging global, high-tech economy, the development of our human resources will be the key means of creating wealth.

The writer is U.S. secretary of labour. This article is reprinted from The New York Times.

Why Israel's 'ethnic cleansing' will not work in South Lebanon

By G.H. Jansen

AFTER the Serbs have "got away" with the "ethnic cleansing" of the Bosnian Muslims, the very same tactic is now being used by Israel against the Shi'ite Muslim inhabitants of South Lebanon; and as of Wednesday, the process has been expanding.

The Serbs did, at least, show some decency or guilt in not proclaiming to the world what they were doing, but no less a person than the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has announced that he wants to make South Lebanon "uninhabitable" by sending "a flood of refugees" into Beirut.

This tactic, that smacks of genocide, is working because the Lebanese estimate is that 180,000 Lebanese have been driven out of their homes in the villages and towns of the south by continuous, round the clock artillery bombardment and attacks from the air. In the first three days of "Operation Accountability" the Israelis say they fired 7,000 shells into Lebanon. After some initial talk, on Sunday, of Hizbollah "terrorist" targets being hit, on Monday the Israelis admitted that they were aiming at "the outskirts" of villages and then on Tuesday at the centre of inhabited areas. No less than 70 locations have been hit.

Propaganda is an important part of the "cleansing" tactic: people are warned of coming attacks and are urged to leave, which gives a good impression while building up fear and getting people on the move. One "decent" aspect of Serb "ethnic cleansing" is that it was carried out by soldiers, some of whom could have got killed in the process; Israel, being a "modern" state, does its "cleansing" at long range, using artillery and planes.

This "ethnic cleansing" is based on the well-known theory that "the people are the water in which the guerrillas, the fish, swim." So drain away the water and the guerrillas cannot move or even live. The tactic has been tried in South Lebanon many times before, but never on so large a scale and it has never worked and it will not work now. Because after some days or weeks or months, the people, invariably, flow back and the fish, the fighters, come back with them. Because the people, who are mostly farmers in South Lebanon, have nowhere else to go. It is not easy to uproot farmers from their ancestral soil that they have tilled for generations.

Perhaps Mr. Rabin is calculating on rendering South

Lebanon permanently "uninhabitable" by smashing up the towns and villages so thoroughly that the people will have nothing to come back to. But as long as the soil, and its crops, and the trees and their fruit remain, the people will return to earn their living off them even if it means living in ruins. It has happened before and people are living, permanently, in ruins in Beirut. The blood-tally of Israel's "Operation Accountability" after three days is 46 Lebanese civilians killed and over 200 wounded; seven Israeli soldiers and two civilians killed and an unknown number wounded before the operation. The tally is somewhat more equal when it comes to depopulation. On the Lebanese side, Nabatieh, a town of 35,000 people, is said to be a "ghost town," but the

as the organised evacuation of the women and children, which is far from being the whole truth.

The Israelis are getting away with the ethnic cleansing just as the Serbs have. This is so because the whole blame for the flare-up is being put on Hizbollah, which killed the seven Israeli soldiers, while nothing is said about Resolution 425 ordering Israel out of Lebanon or the repeated offer by Hizbollah and Shi'ite political leaders to stop attacks on Israel if only it obeyed 425 and got out of the so-called "security zone."

This was especially noticeable in statements from U.S. President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Warren Christopher and in the Security Council which the U.S. has blocked from passing judgement. Israelis talk about the "dirt" of Lebanon, and yet refuse to pull out. This is because Yitzhak Rabin personally. In 1985, Israel, having got its fingers badly burnt in Lebanon, was getting out. At that time Mr. Rabin was minister of defence in a coalition cabinet and many people in Israel, including retired generals, urged him to make it a clean and complete pull-out. Mr. Rabin refused and set up the nine-kilometre-wide so-called "security zone" which has brought nothing but insecurity and violence ever since.

It is because of the continuing Israeli occupation of this part of Lebanon that no Lebanese can think of suppressing Hizbollah which has become the national resistance to a foreign occupier. Indeed, the Lebanese government has described that national resistance as both a right and a duty, which it is.

How is Lebanon, and the Beirut area, coping with the sudden influx of so many people? The burden is eased because the people are southern Shi'ites accustomed to moving back and forth. And the normally large Shi'ite family can always take in more people "for a few days."

What would be really serious would be an exodus from the southern cities of Tyre and Sidon, which is what Israel is threatening to bring about, because, it claims, resistance groups have their bases there.

The key factor in relations between Israel and Lebanon is Resolution 425, but Israel and its friends are trying to pretend that that resolution does not exist. Such moral and political obtuseness simply will not work.

"The tactic has been tried in South Lebanon many times before, but never on so large a scale and it has never worked and it will not work now. Because after some days or weeks or months, the water, the people, invariably, flow back and the fish, the fighters, come back with them. Because the people, who are mostly farmers in South Lebanon, have nowhere else to go."

very same words are used of Kiryat Shmoneh, in northern Israel, and the same must be true of Metulla, standing right on the frontier.

But the two population movements are of very different significance. Shi'ites leaving the south is almost routine in Lebanon, but not so the exodus in Israel where people running away are casting a vote of no-confidence in the Jewish state and its government. Particularly sensitive is the fact that the people settled in the north and other outlying or frontier areas are the darker-skinned, underprivileged immigrants from such places as the Arab countries or India or Ethiopia.

So the Israeli propaganda is trying to cover up what is often a panic flight by presenting it

'New Pacific Community' has U.S., Asia sharing ideas

By Robert F. Holden

SINGAPORE — President Clinton's concept for a "New Pacific Community," as demonstrated by Secretary of State Warren Christopher's recent visit to Asia, calls for a sharing of policy ideas with America's Asian friends, according to a senior U.S. official.

During a background briefing prior to his arrival in Singapore for the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) July 24, the official said: "We're not just out here to lay out blueprints."

"The secretary is coming out here — as the president did earlier in Tokyo — to listen as well as to propose. It is very important that we, both in reality and in style, make clear to our Asian friends that we want to get their ideas and not just lay down American prescriptions," the official said.

"Yes, we'll show leadership. Yes, we have ideas of our own," the official said. "But we mean it when we say we want to hear what their ideas are — to consult with our friends."

The administration expects the secretary's appearance at the meeting to strike a balance between dynamism in proposing ideas and being genuinely receptive to the ideas of others and factoring them into U.S. policy decisions, the official said.

The secretary of state is going to the Asia-Pacific region to begin the implementation of President Clinton's vision of a "New Pacific Community," to flesh out the economic, security and democracy promotion themes expounded by the president in his speeches at Waseda University and in Korea, the official said.

This is Mr. Christopher's third trip to the region in the past six months, and it is one of a series of

trips by senior administration officials that have already taken place, the official said. These trips, the official said, "underline the administration's interest in the Asia-Pacific region, the fact that we are going to stay on in this region and indeed that we're going to be playing a strong leadership role in this region."

There are three components to this trip, the official said — the ASEAN meeting itself, the series of bilateral meetings that take place on the margins of the PMC between the six ASEAN members, seven dialogue partners and observers, and Mr. Christopher's visit — with Under Secretary of Defence Frank Wisner — to Australia.

The United States will pursue its economic interests at the ASEAN PMC on global, regional and bilateral levels, the official said. "On the global level, we're going to press for the successful conclusion of the Uruguay round," the official said. "ASEAN is one of the major initiators of the Uruguay round and would be one of the major beneficiaries, so we hope that this conference would reinforce the new momentum towards concluding the Uruguay round by the end of the year," the official said.

On the regional level, the official said, Mr. Christopher will encourage countries to accept President Clinton's invitation to attend an informal leadership conference in conjunction with the U.S.-hosted Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) ministerial in Seattle in November.

On the bilateral front, the secretary will be pursuing U.S. economic interests in discussions with its ASEAN trade partners as well as with other conference attendees. He will also meet with American business leaders in the region, the official said.

At the ASEAN PMC, the secretary of state will follow up on the four security-related elements of the "New Pacific Community," as laid out by the president in his Korea speech, the official said.

"The first one is that we will maintain our alliance and our military presence," the official said. "In ASEAN we have two treaty allies — the Philippines and Thailand — plus we have access agreements in the wake of the Philippine bases closing where the ASEAN countries have all made available some facilities."

The second theme, the official said, is non-proliferation. "We'll talk about this in some of the conference sessions and in some of the individual bilateral meetings," the official said. "Obviously, this is relevant with respect to China and their alleged exports of missiles and other dangerous technology. It's relevant to discussions with South Korea because of the North Korea nuclear challenge. And it's relevant to our discussions with Russia where we've just had a major breakthrough on the non-proliferation front."

ASEAN itself is important to the cause of non-proliferation, the official said, primarily in areas that require export controls such as chemical weapons and electronic components for missiles.

The third element, a new departure from the policies of past administrations, is regional security dialogue, the official said. "We will maintain our alliances and we will maintain a full military presence," the official said. "Regional dialogues are on top of those foundations. They supplement them, they do not supplant them."

The official cautioned that the dialogues will not result in "instant formal security structures. We're talking about incrementally exploring how you can shore up security in this region."

"Asia is not Europe," the official said. "In Asia the idea is not to build up blocs against a common threat. It's for potential antagonists, for countries which harbour potential apprehensions about other countries to have a chance to talk to each other directly and try to relieve misperceptions... (and) try to head off confrontation, ease tensions and perhaps build up confidence over time."

Southeast Asia will not necessarily be the only area where the United States will support such a framework, the official said. "We probably will need one for North-east Asia as well. But this one can cover not only Southeast Asian problems, but those of the whole region because we have a dialogue not only with the ASEAN countries but with the other dialogue partners — Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Korea, Japan, and the European Community," the official said.

The security issues discussed under this framework can also be divided into global, regional and bilateral areas, the official said.

Finally, the official said, the secretary will emphasise the high priority the Clinton administration places on the promotion of democracy and human rights. "Each country has to find its own way, but there are some universal human rights — recently reaffirmed at the Geneva conference — and, with respect to democracy, open societies make for a more peaceful world," the official said — United States Information Agency.

LETTERS

Indelible experience

To the Editor:

Recently I took an early morning flight from Queen Alia International Airport. Before checking in at the boarding gate, I went to use the women's toilet. This is what I found: two large black garbage bags on the floor, open and overflowing with all manner of refuse; no toilet paper, not even a clean toilet; and no paper towels. The odor and overall cleanliness were so distasteful that I left. I complained to (Haj) this kind of thing always happens. I was also told, by someone cleaning, I do not think either answer can justify the filthy condition of the toilets.

I have waited at the Jordanian border of Ramtha many times and crossed the King Hussein Bridge into the West Bank many more times. At both places the toilets and washing sinks are dirty, lacking malfunctioning and disgusting. For many years I have heard excuses for this continuing situation, and theft. It is obvious that without sufficient water one cannot flush toilet nor can a worker keep the premises clean. I have also been told repeatedly that many people in Jordan abuse public toilets out of ignorance, or they pilfer everything that isn't bolted to the floor because they have so little in their own homes. I am no longer willing to accept these or any other excuses.

It seems that more plausible reasons for the filthy state of these public facilities are the inferior materials, insufficient plumbing, poor building costs. The latest chemicals and the most diligent worker cannot clean a toilet that is non-functioning. These facilities should be gutted and rebuilt to serve the public.

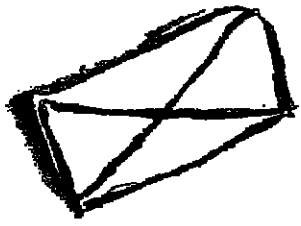
This nation is progressing on many levels and it is unthinkable that such a problem is allowed to continue. Providing Jordanians and is the foundation of respect for others. Anyone exposed to the present pitiful condition of the public toilets at one of Jordan's three gateways will remember it with distaste. All the good food, pleasant hospitality and fascinating sites will not erase the experience.

Ann Sawalha,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

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Weekender



July 29, 1993

Published Every Thursday

Venezuelan soap opera — a mirror to social ills

By Gary Regenstein
Reuter

CARACAS, Venezuela (R) — The Venezuelan leader, his voice cracking with emotion, appeared on prime-time television to announce he was stepping aside to face charges of corruption.

"I would have preferred a different death," he said. Dramatic stuff. But was it merely drama or was it real?

It was both in Venezuela, where society's ills are dramatised nightly in the wildly popular soap opera "Por Estas Calles", featuring corrupt politicians, judges and police, unethical doctors, drug dealers and petty thieves.

The parting line was uttered by President Carlos Andres Perez last May after learning he must stand trial

on charges of embezzlement and misuse of public funds.

Days later, so did Don Chepe, a corrupt governor on "Por Estas Calles" (Through These Streets), the hottest TV show in Venezuela and one that has been sold to countries ranging from Uruguay to the United States and from Chile to China.

It contrasts the high life of the corrupt and the squalor of the slum-dwellers while interweaving comments on the crumbling public services that infuriate residents of Caracas.

The programme, first aired little more than a year ago, serves as an outlet of emotion to many Venezuelans angered by corruption, worried about rising crime and frustrated by appalling water and telephone service.

The drama highlights the negative in this nation that has been gripped by political

crisis, and social unrest sparked by austerity measures that scrapped a paternalistic system of government handouts financed by an oil boom two decades ago.

While some argue that the programme exaggerates the negative, many argue it is a fair mirror to society.

Indeed, a Latin American diplomat, upon arriving in Caracas last year, was told by a colleague that "Por Estas Calles" was a quick study on the nation.

"She told me this would serve me better than talking to all the leaders and analysts about what is going on in the country," the diplomat recalled in an interview.

He got hooked. "I always hated soap operas," he said. "This is a way to study the country. It's all there."

One who claims not to

watch the programme is the suspended president, who nevertheless railed against it during a luncheon with a group of associates and bankers.

"This is irresponsible. This is an incitation to violence," one guest at the luncheon, quoting Mr. Perez, told Reuters.

In fact, the government was so irate at one point that it threatened to shut down the show, arguing that it was sending "subversive" messages.

"Por Estas Calles" was born as a traditional soap opera but, before airing, the staff rewrote it thoroughly after a coup attempt against the Perez administration in February 1992.

After the failed military putsch, nightly news focused on the political and economic crisis, Venezuelans tuned in

en masse, and television producers took their cue to do the same with their soap.

To keep the drama topical, segments are taped three or four days before broadcast, and the staff scours the headlines. At least one show was filmed on the same day as an event.

Unlike virtually all soaps, which dwell heavily on love and lust, producers broadcast 100 consecutive episodes of "Por Estas Calles" without treating viewers to even a simple kiss.

"We have broken the rules," said Alberto Giaroco, head of dramatic programming at Radio Caracas Television, which produces the show.

It has worked. Half of Venezuelans who watch television at 9 p.m. tune in to "Por Estas Calles."

"This is a prototype of

Venezuelan society. This is the reality of the country," said Giaroco, whose office is adorned with an inscription from Latin American independence hero Simon Bolivar which reads, "he who resolves to be free is so."

"Por Estas Calles" is likely to go off the air later in July but only because producers fear it will begin to become repetitive.

"We want it to end on a high note," Giaroco said.

But the programme will live on where it has been sold: Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Brazil, the United States, Spain, Italy, Germany, France, Turkey, Bangladesh, Poland, Czechoslovakia and China.

"In Latin America the problems that we have are similar," Giaroco added.

Diary

APOLOGETIC JUSTICE: In this space last week, we told the story of a journalist whose life was complicated by more than mere threats. A warning bullet was shot at the window of his bedroom in his Amman home. The journalist did not only have to suffer through this ordeal, especially that his 9-month-old baby was in the room at the time, but also had to taste a bit of the medicine of those who have not yet comprehend democracy. He withstood the trauma of an officer at the Preventive Security Department who was attempting to report the problem. But it seems his story had a happy ending, since a senior official at the department called Mr. Ramadan Rawashdeh at the P.S.D. Ahamat weekly offices and formally apologised for the behaviour of the officer. According to Mr. Rawashdeh, the official described the incident as the "unilateral and unwarranted" behaviour of one person who was not representing the department's views. Mr. Rawashdeh says he is satisfied with the apology. As for the case itself, it seems it has been registered against "unknown persons" for lack of sufficient evidence.

GOOD-BYES AND HELLOS: Eric Gaudiosi, a third cousin at the American embassy in Amman, has been the subject of many parties in his honour as he bids farewell to his friends in our capital before heading to his next post in Japan. Barring the public complication of his much publicised meeting with Hamas in Amman, his posting here has encountered very few snags. And to attest to his good nature and efficiency, his farewells appear to have taken a turn for the moment while Mr. Gaudiosi awaits the visit of an unexpected fan. The wife of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, sources tell the Diary, was so pleased with Mr. Gaudiosi's handling of their earlier trip in Amman that she requested that he extend his stay in Jordan until her trip here next month ends. He might be happy with the extra time with Amman friends, but it is not undecided whether his time with Mrs. Christopher will include a trip to the city of Petra — Mrs. Christopher hopes it will be included in her itinerary — which may mean an overnight stay for the Christophers in Amman. The Christophers are expected to arrive here on Aug. 4 and, being the last leg of their Middle East tour, many of these familiar with how diplomacy works expect that Mrs. Christopher will get her trip to the rose city of Petra and a taste of Mr. Gaudiosi's efficiency.

HAPPY BEGINNING AND ENDING: At the beginning of this month, this column reported that a Jordanian undergoing medical treatment in England was exempted from paying one of his medical bills because his doctor held His Majesty King Hussein in high regard. The patient, Rajai Matalaka, was being treated by a Dr. Newman-Taylor, who was being assisted by an Iraqi doctor called Raed Hashim. This story, it transpired, has a nice beginning back here in Amman at a much earlier date. Dr. Hashem, we are told, was helped by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan to see his family in Amman during the Gulf war. At the time, Dr. Hashem was a student of medicine in England and was unable to return to Baghdad and see his family for a period of five years. Upon hearing of his story, Crown Prince Hassan arranged for both Dr. Hashem and his family in Iraq to be brought to Amman where the family was able to spend a few weeks with Dr. Hashem. According to the source who tipped us off this happy beginning, "Jordanian kindness and Hashemite generosity... do not go unnoticed." And as if to reiterate this point, Mr. Matalaka's relatives tell us that His Majesty King Hussein responded to the reporting of Dr. Newman and Dr. Hashem's generosity by ordering the payment of all Mr. Matalaka's other outstanding medical bills.

(Continued from page 2)

Conservationists fight to save Robin Hood's forest

By Jeff Daeschner
Reuter

SHERWOOD FOREST, England — Robin Hood and his band would have a hard job finding a place to hide from the Sheriff of Nottingham in Sherwood Forest these days.

The forest of 500-year-old oaks and slender silver birches where the legendary thief and his merry men used to live stands on the brink of extinction, forestry experts say.

Sprawling towns and farms, as well as the constant use of the woods for recreation, have endangered the forest which used to be called "Shirewood" because it covered most of the shire (county) of Nottingham in central England.

Britain's Forestry Commission aims to save the forest by

planting trees to recreate the wood and heathlands as part of the country's fight to protect its endangered natural reserves.

A year after launching the project, efforts to involve local farmers and corporations have got off to a slow start. So far, only 500 trees have been planted, paid for by a Japanese company as part of a general environmental programme.

"If we don't save the forest now, here won't be much of it left," said Austin Brady, project director for the Sherwood Initiative. "We're aiming to bring it back from the brink."

Under the Sherwood Initiative, conservationists are trying to work with local people to plant 2,000 acres (800 hectares) of trees in the next 10 to 20 years to unite the

remnants of the forest's historic heath and woodlands.

"We're not looking at planting vast areas of new forest, but rather creating carefully preserved areas," Mr. Brady said.

The Forestry Commission plans to mark the latest phase of the Sherwood Initiative by opening visitors' facilities in one of the four remnants of the ancient forest.

A fire in May — suspected by some as arson — destroyed the main attraction, a newly completed £19,000 (\$28,000) visitors' centre.

"We don't have the money to rebuild. We'll have to wait a while and rethink our plans (for the centre)," Mr. Brady said.

New facilities such as trekking routes and a war park will open in a newer section of the forest to draw some of

the area's 800,000 visitors each year from the ancient Birklands Woodlands where Robin and his big-hearted fellow outlaws are reputed to have lived.

Most foreign tourists visit the Birklands' Sherwood Forest County Park to see the oak tree where Robin and his men used to hide from the Sheriff of Nottingham.

Forestry experts say the tree, at least 500 years old and propped up by timbers, would have been at best a mere sapling in the early 13th century, when legal records refer to Robert Hood as a fugitive from justice.

The tree, known as the Major Oak, is the biggest in Sherwood Forest and the 16th largest in Britain, according to forestry figures. Its trunk measures 10 metres (33 feet); while the tree

stands about 27 metres high and its branches spread some 28 metres.

Mr. Brady said the Sherwood Initiative was an attempt to remind visitors that the forest was historically much larger than the Birklands.

It originally embraced most of the villages, farms, heaths and woodlands in Nottinghamshire, covering an area about 32 kilometres long and 13 kilometres wide.

Over the centuries, farming and urban growth have taken land from the forest, the four fragments of which now cover a total of just 10,000 acres (4,000 hectares) criss-crossed by roads linking towns, farms, coal mines and an army training camp.

"For a lot of people, who come to the area, there's a certain amount of disappoint-

ment because the fragments of the forest don't live up to their expectations," Mr. Brady said.

The project's long-term goal is to adapt Sherwood's tourist appeal to its modern use as a site for lumber production, wildlife preservation and recreation, including cycling, trekking, and car rallying.

"When you're talking about woods and forests and you ask someone to name a forest, they usually think of Sherwood Forest. Because it's so well known, Sherwood should be a shining example of what forests are like," Mr. Brady said.

He added that he expected it will be 10 years before visitors notice a difference in the forest. "It's going to be a long process, but it's good to get it started," he said.

A true statesman's voice

The Passionate Attachment: America's Involvement With Israel, 1947 to the present
By George W. Ball and Douglas B. Ball
W.W. Norton, New York 1992. \$24.95.

George Ball is one of America's few diplomats who qualify as a true statesman. His wise counsel helped guide U.S. policy in rebuilding Europe after World War II, aided President Kennedy during the Cuban missile crisis, and personified the humane side of America as ambassador to the United Nations. Most notably, as under-secretary of state in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, he was a lonely voice in opposing America's growing involvement in Vietnam. Such a distinguished background makes George Ball's views eagerly sought.

But not so his latest book. The *Passionate Attachment*, written with his historian son, Douglas, The reason for this sudden shunning of one of America's most honoured figures is not hard to find. Ball is a trenchant critic of the United States' excessive support of Israel, which he compares to the "passionate attachment" toward another country that George Washington warned against two centuries ago. In the same way that Ball once alerted the nation to the dangers of involvement in Vietnam, he now cautions in this illuminating book against America's uncritical support of Israel.

The *Passionate Attachment* provides an extraordinarily insightful examination of how Israel has managed to influence U.S. policy since 1947. Only President Eisenhower stands out in this sad survey as an American leader with the grit to stand for principle against Israeli violations of international law. But, notes Ball: "Until 1992, these were the last occasions on which America acted incisively toward Israel."

Ball points out that now is an opportune time to correct U.S. policy towards Israel and the Arab states. Gone is the absurd rationale that Israel is a "strategic ally" since Soviet penetration of the Middle East is no longer a worry. What is needed now, Ball concludes, is for the U.S. to join the other four permanent members of the Security Council — Britain, China, France and Russia — and adopt an omnibus resolution that would encapsulate the world's position on the fundamental issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The granting of self-determination to the Palestinians, allowing Jerusalem to be the seat of government for both Palestine and Israel, ending Israel's occupation of Arab land, eliminating Jewish settlements in the occupied territories or placing settlers under Palestinian law, demilitarising the Golan Heights and the Jordan Valley, and lifting the Arab boycott against Israel.

Ball concludes his book with an eloquent reminder that such actions demand implementation because "no country can possibly reconcile its concern for liberty and human rights with the continued mistreatment of the Palestinian people, whose only crime is their desire for self-determination." — Middle East International.

James Abourezk

BOOK REVIEWS

An objective airing

Arab Voices: The Human Rights Debate In The Middle East
By Kevin Dwyer
Routledge, London 1991. £10.99

Kevin Dwyer has good reason to be interested in human rights issues, given his long association with Amnesty International. He has equally good reason to be acutely concerned with cultural expression in the Middle East and North Africa, given his background as an anthropologist and a leading exponent of "dialogues", the view that sociological and anthropological investigation is a cultural confrontation in which the attitudes and conclusions of both cultures are simultaneously open to question. Both these interests come together in this excellent book, which belies its title and is far more wide-ranging in its subject matter.

The book is really based on North Africa, on the three countries of Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco. This is partly because of the author's own preferences and because these three countries are among the freest societies in the region and thus are the easiest for Western access and investigation. Its real subject is not just the "human rights debate" but much wider cultural attitudes relating to the role of religion, to concepts of individual freedom, the role of women and human rights as conveniently understood in the West. It contrasts indigenous views of these concepts with indigenous attitudes towards Western interpretations of them, at a time when it is Western values that are being imposed worldwide. The book, true to its implicit theoretical assumptions, does not try to draw explicit conclusions; instead it contrasts different views from a wide range of commentators who are often quoted at length.

The result is a compendium of attitudes and views that are of vital importance to anyone concerned with understanding such issues in a Middle Eastern context. Its commentators are drawn from Islamicists, orthodox Muslims, secularists and the new technocrats and intellectuals of the region. Their views may well be open to criticism, but at least they are available for criticism. In any case, the very fact that they have been recorded by a sympathetic, albeit critical, observer makes it clear that many indigenous views deserve a far more serious and sympathetic hearing than they have received to date. In a world where Eurocentrism has acquired renewed respectability in recent years, such objective treatment of Muslim and Middle Eastern feelings is all the more important and worthwhile — Middle East International.

George Joffe

Iran's malaise

Reconstruction And Regional Diplomacy In The Persian Gulf
Edited by H. Amirahmadi And N. Entessar
Routledge, London 1992. £35

Here is a mixed bag of ten studies about Iran, its domestic condition and international relations, contributed mostly by Iranian academics and other scholars in American institutions. They deal chiefly with development since the Islamic revolution, the foundation of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the war against Iraq; but some, evidently written before Desert Storm and the fall of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, are a little dated already.

Since the revolution, according to Dr. Amirahmadi (Rutgers University), the extraordinary course of events has been largely "unfavourable for Iran's long-term development and standing among the community of nations." His copious statistics of direct and indirect economic damage of revolution, war and earthquake are indeed appalling. In an economy which is neither free-market nor planned he lists crippling imbalances of demand and supply, expenditure and income, labour and employment, and growth and available technology.

To deal with this catastrophic situation he observes that President Hashemi Rafsanjani "has been steadily moving away from ideology towards more pragmatism"; he quotes the foreign minister on a "new order" in which "economic considerations overshadow political priorities"; and notes signs that the chief of the Planning and Budget Organisation looks to a free-market system and the director of the Central Bank to foreign investment. The author himself would like to see an "Iranian perestroika", a quest for friendship in the West, and the return, for example, of some of the two million Iranians who have left Iran since the fall of the shah. As to international relations, Dr. Ehteshami (Exeter) believes that "Islamic" foreign policy is now "up for modernisation" and that "the pragmatist line is winning."

Such a development, of course, is to be wished. But both these observers are aware of bitter resistance on the part of leaders like Ali Akbar Mohtashemi and Ahmad Khomeini and their followers. And, in his paper on the American connection, Dr. Milani (South Florida), blaming the errors of the U.S., as Iranians tend to do, for whatever has recently happened, recalls that Iran's Islamic Revolution, however sour it has turned, was "one of the most popular revolutions of our time."

But why is Iran particularly prone to revolution in the first place? Trying to answer that question, Professor Nikki Keddie (California) disengages cultural, economic and political factors, reverting to Zoroastrian, the Shi'ites and the Qajars, but draws attention, in reference to the recent revolution, to special elements of disaffection amongst students, urban terrorists, the bazaar, and radical clerics excited by the agitation of Ayatollah Khomeini.

Such a pity that most of these essays, laced with hackneyed jargon and mixed metaphors and sprinkled with misprints, are so badly written — Middle East International.

A.R.H. Kellas

Scientists study heart disease

By Loran Neergaard
The Associated Press

ATHENS, Ga. — Scientists are still baffled about why black Americans die faster from heart disease than their white counterparts. But a new study attempts for the first time to find possible physical causes of the problem.

"We think the common denominator is the blood vessel itself," said Dr. Randall Tackett of the University of Georgia, who is conducting the study. "But no one has really looked at blood vessels... to explain the difference between black and white patients."

Heart disease is the nation's No. 1 killer, causing about half a million deaths each year. Black men have a 39 per cent higher rate of death from cardiovascular disease than white men. The risk is even higher for black women — 68 per cent over white women.

Blacks die of heart disease much faster than whites. Even minor hardening of the arteries can be fatal, and blacks are more prone to debilitating high blood pressure.

Doctors don't know why. In women, they think hormones certainly play a role. And they suspect some of the difference results from higher poverty rates among black Americans. But those theories are

based only on surveys of people's habits and medical records, and most of that research was done primarily on white males. Experts say Dr. Tackett is the first to search for a physical cause for heart disease's racial disparity.

"Knowing at the cellular level or at the vascular level if there are in fact differences — that would be very important," said Dr. Richard Pratt, a professor at Stanford University. It's extremely difficult to find living human tissues, much less experiment with it, Dr. Pratt said. Among the few scientists who have done so are Stanford researchers trying to determine why heart bypasses often relog.

To compare blacks' and whites' blood vessels, Dr. Tackett takes tissue from heart-bypass operations at the Medical College of Georgia. The Medical College does about 250 bypasses a year, half on black patients. Dr. Tackett expects to compare tissue from about 600 patients, black and white, in the next three years.

He's not sure what to expect. Black patients' blood vessels may be more sensitive to stress. They may need different concentrations of medicines to fend off heart disease. They may lack the chemicals needed to break down free radicals, the destructive molecules that float through people's bodies.

Mind your language

By Jean-Claude Elias

Word Processing (WP) programmes on Personal Computers (PC) are replacing the traditional typewriter in most offices and even in households, reducing it to an endangered species.

In the past ten years, office equipment manufacturers have designed advanced typewriters with memory, sophisticated functions and a wide palette of type styles, in an attempt to catch up with PC based WP. Alas, for each step typewriters were taking, WP software took ten. Today's WP programmes are infinitely superior to even the best electronic typewriter and not much more expensive.

WP is, by large, the main reason why private users buy PCs. The three most popular programmes — MS-Word, WordPerfect and WordStar — share a market estimated at tens of millions of dollars a year. The possibilities they offer are enormous and a single operator generally, will never need all the features built in the system. They go from a simple letter to your grandpa's to a professionally edited and illustrated publication.

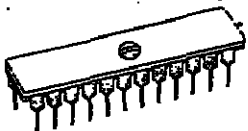
Among all these facilities that I do not plan to detail here, one is particularly impressive — the Spell Check. At any moment, while you are typing your text, you can require this function to check the correct spelling of your words. And it does it well, provided...

As it is always the case with computers, nothing is instant, immediate or straightforward. In order to use the Spell Check efficiently, you have to set it according to your needs. This means that you have to specify the way you want it to work.

For the English language for instance, you must indicate whether you want the English or the American spelling. You also have to decide if you want the words checked while you type them or upon request only. You do not have to do this every time you use the programme, but only the first time. Unless of course you decide, later on, to change some point in the settings.

Another decision you have to make is to let the system verify or on the contrary, ignore all fully capitalised words or those that only start with a capital letter. This point is important since names of people and places do not follow strict rules and are therefore difficult to check. If the computer can tell whether Washington or Jordan are correctly written, for they are well known names, it won't "understand" names like Zerqa or Nabil for example.

chip talk



Software designers have thought of this and offer the user, within the Spell Check, the possibility to add his or her own words. If you type "Al Rai" and your Spell Check flashes on it, indicating that it didn't recognise the word, you just press one button that saves this new word on the hard disk, embedding it in the programme's internal dictionary. The next time you type "Al Rai" the WP won't consider it as a typing error.

As great as this can be, if you type a lot of foreign or special words, it can be very tiresome to keep adding new words to the WP dictionary. Nothing is perfect.

One thing the Spell Check won't do is to verify the grammar of your sentences. It will consider "I swim in the sea" correct for it can't make the difference between "see" and "sea" in such a case. This is where the Grammar Check comes.

Introduced only three or four years ago, the Grammar Check is far from being perfect yet. While some software have a built-in grammar facility, Grammatik IV, an independent programme, can be added to your favourite WP in order to scrutinise your sentences. It works well, up to a certain point. More than actually correcting your grammar, it scans your text and, depending on its nature (business letter, personal letter, essay, poem, report, ...) tells you how you are doing, if your paragraphs are too long, too short, if your sentences are easy to read and understand, if your punctuation is correct, and so on.

When the Grammar Check is fine tuned and becomes as performing as the Spell Check is now, writing will be a painless undertaking for those who had problems writing to their boss and begging for a raise. As for those dying to ask, the answer is yes — I write "Chip Talk" using one of these WP programmes, with its Spell Check, but not its Grammar Check.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By Mohammad A. Shuqair

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

★ Three cyclists from India-Adi B. Hakim, Jal P. Bapasola and Rustom J. Bhungara circled the world in a period of 4 years, 5 months, 3 days covering 44,000 miles (Oct. 15, 1923-March 18-1928).

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

★ The longest wrestling match — Alf Davey of England wrestled John Shea 11½ hours before a fall. (Michigan-1908)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

★ William Bolton of Harewood, England hiked 400 miles for exercise 10 times each year for the last 10 years of his life — until his death at the age of 80.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

★ Louis Cyr, a famous Canadian strongman lifted 545 pounds with one finger.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

★ A prize fight in Virginia City, Montana, between Con Orem and Hugh O'Neill lasted 193 rounds and was finally declared a draw because of darkness.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

LET'S LEARN ARABIC

Useful expressions

— Take a seat.
— Come in!
— It's cheap.
— It's too expensive.
— That's all.
— You're right.
— You're wrong.
— It's funny.
— It's good.
— It's not true.
— I understand.
— Certainly.
— Certainly not.

Illess.
Odkhol.
Rakhees.
Ghali fidan.
Yakdi/Kitaya
Inta ala haq/inta ala sawab.
Inta ghalian.
Shay mod'hik.
Kway'yes/Zain.
Ghair sahif.
Ana fahman.
Bit'a'keed.
Ghair mo'akkad.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

TIME FOR FUN

Nancy was having coffee with Helen.
Nancy asked: "How do you know your husband loves you?"

"He takes out the garbage every morning."
"That's not love. That's good housekeeping."
"My husband gives me all the spending money I need."
"That's not love. That's generosity."
"My husband never looks at other women."
"That's not love. That's poor vision."
"John always opens the door for me."
"That's not love. That's good manners."
"John kisses me even when I've eaten garlic and I have cutlery in my hair."
"Now, that's love."

YOUR DREAMS INTERPRETED

WATER: (Clear) comfort and happiness; (dirty) sorrow and trouble; (stagnant) severe illness, probably ending with death; (very cold) beware of enemies; (hot) illness; (seeing in improbable places or circumstances) trouble and danger; (dried up or disturbed) an improvement in affairs; (gushing up from below) a sign of unexpected enemies; (carrying it in a sieve or other unlikely receptacle without spilling) much domestic trouble, disappointment, great losses; (another person doing so) good luck to the dreamer or to that person, or good luck to the dreamer in connection with that person; (drinking clear water) a lucky sign, comfort and satisfaction.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

KEY: Receipt of money. (For young people) a good and handsome partner in life; (holding a key) settlement of business perplexities; (lost key) anger, worry and want.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

Hatshepsut

The queen of the 18th Egyptian dynasty who died C. 1481. She was the daughter of Thutmose I. She reigned with her half-brother Thutmose III. She concentrated on keeping peace and building the country's economy. She constructed a magnificent temple at Deir El Bahr beside the Nile near Thebes. She was married to Thutmose II, on whose accession (1516 B.C.) she became the real ruler. On his death she acted as regent for his son, Thutmose III, then had herself crowned as pharaoh. Maintaining the fiction that she was male, she was represented with the regular pharaonic attributes, including a beard. To avenge herself from Hatshepsut, Thutmose III destroyed more than 100 statues of hers, besides other monuments erected in her great temple.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

PUZZLES

Arrowwords

EACH arrow points to the beginning of the word answering the appropriately numbered clue. The words extend from arrow to arrow, the final letter of one word becoming the first letter of the next.

Write your solutions clockwise into the "target", and remember, only the twelve letters in the lower diagram are to be used.



1 → Perspire.
2 → Latin-American dance
3 → Donkey.

A B E E L M R S S T U W

Visa to hell

By E. Yaghi

Abdul Rahman contemplated a pilgrimage to Mecca, but he had a problem. Who could he leave his Amaneh (trust) with? He thought and thought and finally said to himself, "Of course, why didn't I think of Zaki before? He is a very religious man and a friend of mine as well. I am positive that my trust will be safe with him."

So, Abdul Rahman left his trust with Zaki and went for the pilgrimage in Mecca feeling quite secure that he left his property with the most suitable person that he knew. After a month's time and the successful completing of his holy journey, Abdul Rahman returned home and celebrated the occasion of his return by receiving guests who welcomed and congratulated him. When the visitors stopped coming and Abdul Rahman had a chance to recover from all the exciting events, he remembered the property that he had left for safe-keeping with his friend. "I must go and ask for the trust and also see how Zaki is doing."

So, on a bright sunny day when life seemed very promising, Abdul Rahman set out to visit his friend. "I am young, have a good job, have gone to Haj and now I want to marry. My trust will pay all my expenses and will enable me to settle down with a nice girl."

He approached his friend's house and knocked on the door. A young man answered and said: "Yes, may I help you?"

Abdul Rahman replied, "Salam aleikum! Is Zaki available? I am a friend of his and before I went to Haj, I left my Amaneh with him."

But Abdul Rahman became very disappointed when Zaki's son said that while Abdul Rahman was gone to the pilgrimage, his father had died and that he knew nothing about any trust or where his father may have put it. He had lost a friend and also his trust. Now he could not get married for a long time to come. What could he do? He decided at last to go and ask a sheikh's advice.

The sheikh told him: "Go to the Zam Zam Well in

Mecca, perform ablution and pray two rakat. If your friend is a member of Heaven, then his soul will appear to you and you can ask him whatever you want."

Abdul Rahman felt he had little choice so he went to Mecca, performed ablution and prayed two rakat. He waited and waited but Zaki's soul did not come. Again, very disappointed, he returned home and went to the sheikh and reported what happened. "I did what you said but Zaki's soul did not appear."

The sheikh looked very thoughtful and concerned. His forehead knitted in wrinkles and with seeming effort he softly spoke: "You never know. Perhaps your friend is not of the community of Heaven. He might just be of the citizens of Hell. Go to a certain ancient well in Yemen, perform ablution and pray two rakat. If your friend is from Hell, he will appear to you."

What choice did he have? Abdul Rahman went to Yemen and to the designated well, made ablution and prayed two rakat. Not much later, Zaki's soul appeared to him. At first, Abdul Rahman almost choked. He felt the colour drain out of his face. His hands felt cold and they shook. He stuttered when he first spoke, "But, but, but, what I mean is, where did you put my Amaneh?"

A voice replied which seemed like a moaning echo, "I buried it under the apple tree in my backyard."

"But, why, O, Zaki. Why are you in hell? You were so good and religious? I even trusted you with all my worldly property!"

Before he disappeared forever, the apparition of nothingness said in a sorrowful echo: "Because I did not visit Selat Al Rahem (female relatives, especially those closest such as sisters, mother and daughters). So beware that you do not commit the same offense. All men's deeds are measured by their intentions. Religion is never just following specific rules and ignoring others. It is a lifestyle that enters the mind, soul and heart and becomes a practice that enlightens not only the doer, but the receiver as well."

Jurassic Park raises ethical questions

By Christopher Hines

Agence France Presse

ALAMEDA, California

It may only be fiction for now, but the genetically engineered dinosaurs that wreak mayhem in the blockbuster film Jurassic Park are based on some measure of scientific possibility. This raises the question: If you can build a better dinosaur, should you?

A theme underlying the film's snazzy special effects is the dilemma of unbridled genetic research, driven by pure profit, leading to biological disaster.

"The work is uncontrolled," wrote Jurassic Park author and physician Michael Crichton in the book's introduction. "No one supervises it. No federal law regulates it. There is no coherent government policy, in America, or elsewhere in the world."

Genetic researchers are standing on the brink of a biological revolution that some say could have a profound effect on the evolution of man himself.

"The technology is much further along than the public knows about or the public debate," said Jeremy Rifkin,

director of the Foundation of Economic Trends, a Washington D.C.-based group that advocates stricter regulation of biotechnology. "The environmental questions are profound, such as manipulating the genetic code. We have a deregulated technological revolution."

For now, the research is limited to making tomatoes that withstand bruising, fish that spawn quickly, cows that produce more milk and medicines to treat previously incurable diseases.

But advances may soon give scientists the tools to do more, such as alter the genetic makeup of man or introduce new types of animals into the environment.

"There is no process for assessing the risk before these animals are released

into the environment," said since it affects such a wide array of industries, from agriculture and consumer products to health care, the oversight is divided up among several federal agencies.

Even the U.S. government acknowledges the lack of an overall regulatory agency.

"Because biotechnology consists of processes that are integrated in research and production by a variety of industries, the government does not classify biotechnology as a separate industry...nor collect specific production employment, trade or (research and development) data," according to a report released earlier this year by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

But products derived from biotechnology research are

Jane Rissler, a biotechnology specialist with the National Wildlife Federation. "We have to start thinking of the impacts of that."

Some regulation of biotechnology does exist, but expected to reach \$4 billion in sales this year in the United States alone, up from \$350 million in 1986, according to the Commerce Department. The industry is also expected to grow from 15 to 20 per cent annually over the next five years.

Eric Christensen, a spokesman for the Biotechnology Industry Organisation, which represents many of the U.S. biotechnology companies, said public confidence in the new technology is vital to continued growth in the industry.

"We've never shied away from regulation," Mr. Christensen said. "We certainly want to make sure that it protects the needs of the public, but at the same time, doesn't kill the industry."

Jurassic Park, he said, was a nice piece of fiction and nothing more. "Jurassic Park is about as much to do with biotechnology as Star Wars had to do with space technology," he added.

JTV CHANNEL 2

WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, July 29

8:30 Too Close For Comfort

Tenant's Anyone

9:10 Quantum Leap

10:00 News In English

10:20 Feature Film — Common Ground

Starring: Sean McCann and Richard Thomas

Friday, July 30

8:30 Head Of The Class

Mr. Moore gets romantic poetry messages in the mail and he tries to find the lady who sent them.

9:10 Reasonable Doubts

After Math

Kay gets raped by one of her friends, a policeman, and Tessa helps her in forcing the policeman to confess.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Echoe

Clair keeps studying at the University of Dublin, and doesn't care about her social life.

Saturday, July 31

8:30 Wacky World

9:00 Perspective

9:30 Varieties

10:00 News In English

10:20 Feature Film — In The Eyes of A Stranger

Starring: Richard Anderson and Justine Bateman

Sunday, Aug. 1

A girl by the name of Lynn finds one million dollars in cash hidden by a big gang in an old deserted factory. Lynn asks the police to protect her from the gang.

8:30 Step By Step

Lana runs in the elections for the presidency of the Student Council. Her campaign is a little weak so JT runs against her and wins.

9:10 The Trials Of Life.

10:00 News In English

10:20 French Series

Monday, Aug. 2

8:30 Golden Girls

Dorothy hires a nurse to take care of her mother Sophia. The girls do not like the nurse, so they ask her to quit, but she refuses.

9:10 Thirtysomething

Nancy's Mom

Nancy and Elliott are trying successfully to bridge the gap, and break the ice in their relationship, but Nancy's mother feels quite differently.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Columbo

No Time To Die

A bride is abducted on her wedding night, and to her surprise she finds another wedding awaiting her.

Tuesday, Aug. 3

8:30 Detectives

Strangers In Paradise

9:00 Faces And Places

9:30 A Kind Of Magic

10:00 News In English

10:20 Feature Film — Weep No More My Lady

Starring: Daniel J. Travanti and Shelly Winters

When Leif, a temperamental film star who has just turned 40, is found drowned after a binge of drinks, drugs and hysteria everyone presumes suicide.

Wednesday, Aug. 4

8:30 Night Court

The Night Off

9:10 The Story Of Hollywood

From "B" Movies to Blockbuster

This episode talk about the B movies.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Mini Series — Memories Of Midnight

Starring: Omar Sharif and Jane Seymour

Costa's wife and her brother find out all the secrets. Costa is hiding.

Jagger at 50 — middle age catches up with Jumping Jack Flash



Mick Jagger

By Peter Millership
Reuter

LONDON — Mick Jagger, 50 this month and already a grandfather, may like to see himself as the Peter Pan of rock. But today's teenagers don't share their parents' adulation.

"He's married to that model Jerry Hall," said 14-year-old Annika Gregson. "He's probably 50-something. He looks it." Asked to name a record by the Rolling Stones, she echoed the response of all the teenagers canvassed: "I haven't got a clue."

Jagger, who reached his half century on July 26, is older than U.S. President Bill Clinton. His pouting, microphone-swinging swagger still fills stadiums, predominantly with middle-aged groovers.

"They want you to be like you were in 1969," Jagger once said in a rare aside on age, not his pet topic. "They want you to, because otherwise their youth goes with you. It's very selfish but it's understandable."

The dreamy Stones Hyde Park free concert, the stabbing to death of a youth by Hell's Angels at a concert in California, Jagger's arrest for drugs and his wedding to Nicaraguan beauty Bianca Perez Macias provided enduring memories for a generation.

"Mick Jagger was the sixties," said journalist Barry May, who wrote the first review of a Stones concert played in the backroom of a London pub. "People see him as an icon of that age. They see themselves reflected in him."

There was a time when

every British party or discotheque produced exhibitionists pantomiming Jagger's movements while his sybaritic lifestyle and lyrics on sex and drugs fascinated teenagers and shocked parents.

"If Jagger were an actor or a politician his half century would pass with relatively little comment," said writer Adam Sweeting. "But Jagger still carries the burden of the sixties generation that believed it was creating a new world order."

With the Beatles long gone and other 60s successes burnt out or forgotten, the Rolling Stones, now a colossal business enterprise, have become the grand old men of rock — an image that would have horrified the 60s rebels.

Rock critics are asking just how long Jagger can carry on strutting his stuff without looking ridiculous and when

he will come up with a new record to rival Rolling Stones classics such as Satisfaction, Brown Sugar and Jumping Jack Flash.

May, whose review fired the interest of the mainstream music press in the Stones which led to their success, said: "Now business clients are taken to Stones concerts as if they were Henley (rowing regatta) or Ascot (horse races)."

Like many of his generation, May asked: "Why does he need to do it? It can't be the money. There must be some sort of other need. Public adulation?"

At 26, Jagger famously said: "When I'm 33, I quit. That's the time when a man has to do something else. I don't want to be a rock and roll singer all my life." But at 50, Jagger's energy surprises even his most devoted fans.

His age is a sensitive issue and guests at a lavish party this month were told it was to celebrate Bastille Day and to dress in French Revolution style. It was definitely not the Mick Jagger birthday party.

One close friend told the Daily Mail Jagger was paranoid about the birthday: "He's concerned about the opening of Jurassic Park and people might start calling him the dinosaur of rock which is what happened when the film opened in America."

With his craggy face and famous lips, Jagger, whose fortune is about \$135 million, was recently described by columnist Adam Edwards as like "a trendy, well-preserved senior executive of a successful company."

The 60s bad boy who dabbled in magic and androgyny is now one of Britain's richest

men and a bastion of respectability. With houses in Manhattan, Mustique, London and France, he is — to quote a Jagger lyric — "a man of wealth and taste."

Despite jeers about "wrinkles" in the popular press, Jagger's love life and his musical forays still grab headlines and his ageing army of fans has remained loyal.

"Even if Jagger is beginning to look a bit daft gyrating up there in his padded pedal pushers at 50, he belongs to all our yesterdays," said columnist Val Hennessy, adding that he needed an "intelligent and substantial biographer."

She needed no prompting. "Me for instance. Here I am Mick, the girl in the polka-dot hotpants who was thrown off the stage at the Hyde Park free concert."

London Theatre Festival offers the unusual, and the weird

By Matt Wolf
The Associated Press

LONDON — In a city suffused with theatre, doing something different demands long leaps of the imagination.

For the London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT), which has just ended this year's run, it means taking the audience grocery shopping, performing a Spanish classic in Punjabi or presenting Chinese rock 'n' roll at the highest decibel level possible.

There's nothing traditional to most LIFT events, beyond the sight of an ever-growing public opening itself up to new forms of theatre even when the language — literally and figuratively — is often unclear.

"LIFT has always been about what theatre is, where it can happen, who can be involved, and who goes to it," festival co-director Rose De Wend Fenton said in an interview.

It can be a significant launching pad. Britons got a first taste of the singular style of Canadian director Robert Lepage when the 1987 LIFT mounted his six-hour Dragons Trilogy. His Midsummer Night's Dream, staged in a pool of mud, was a sensation at London's national theatre last year.

Death And The Maiden, Chilean dramatist Ariel Dorfman's widely acclaimed play about torture, got its first British exposure at a

reading co-sponsored by LIFT.

"It's not just about text. It's going right back to basics. It's stretching the form," Fenton said of the biennial event that she and Lucy Neal founded in 1981.

In addition to traditional playhouses, sites this year included an East End market, the grounds of the National Maritime Museum in south-east London with its classical loggia facing across Greenwich Park and the boating ponds of Regent's Park.

"Traditionally, international theatre is staged for a narrow elitist audience. We're trying to draw a much wider audience by staging events in unusual places," Fenton said.

The idea seemed to pay off. A bright Sunday afternoon drew a sell-out crowd of 400 to Greenwich Park to watch 10 puppeteers — all of them knee deep in a 224-ton container of water — launch a flotilla of puppets, from amorous buffaloes to some-saunting children.

In a lunch-time, weekday performance in Regent's Park, 100 or so spectators saw Manhattanites hurl abuse at each other across the boating pond in Bad Penny, a 40-minute play by American Mac Wellman. The play included an umbrella-wielding chorus which chanted "incomprehensible."

The lively and appreciative audience — many of them on bikes — included actress

Sigourney Weaver, wife of the play's director Jim Simpson. A passing heckler looked skeptical when a LIFT staff member informed him that he was disrupting "a performance."

Regent's Park also saw another of LIFT's odder performers: 42-year-old Bobby Baker, a north London housewife and mother of two whose How To Shop: The Lecture is the second in a five-part series, Daily Life.

Her show offered helpful hints on manoeuvring a shopping cart through a busy grocery store, making toffee apples and finding the link between parsley and humility.

Baker's aim is lofty, indeed — to find in mundane events the seeds of something spir-

itual. It's also the only LIFT show to offer free food in the form of a homemade — and rather soggy — garlic crouton.

More conventional fare gives theatrical classics a fresh, or unexpected, airing. Chekhov's Three Sisters was the source text for Brace Up presented by New York's celebrated avant-garde Wooster Group, film actor Willem Dafoe among them.

As directed by Elizabeth Lecompte, Dafoe's wife, this is Chekhov steeped in off Broadway attitude. The play is chopped up, rearranged, and much of it told on video. Musical snatches from Tchaikovsky's opera Eugene Onegin and even Blowin' In The Wind punctuate the text,

and the youngest sister Irina is played by an actress (Beatrice Roth) old enough to be all three sisters' mother.

Federico Garcia Lorca's Yerma, a fiery Spanish drama about a woman's infertility, gained in exoticism what Western audiences lost in comprehension as it was performed in Punjabi under the direction of Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry, from India.

In Chowdhry's staging, Yerma is no repressed barren woman but the earthy equivalent of an Ibsen heroine, stifled by a loveless marriage. Stage images of a burning rope and blood-spattered sheet spoke volumes in themselves.

No less intriguing were two new works from China.

Red Noise was a rambling account of life in present-day Peking related by Australian raconteur Geremie Barme. Singer and so-called "maverick philosopher" He Yong provided the high-decibel musical interludes.

The Chengdu Theatre Company's Ripples Across Stagnant Water, directed and adapted by Zha Li Fan from Li Jieren's novel of misplaced love, is the first contemporary Chinese play to be seen in Britain. (Previous cultural events from China have been limited to musicians or acrobats).

Costing \$1.8 million drawn from corporate and private sponsors, this year's LIFT aimed to play to 100,000 people.

Boyz director says he's unspoiled by success

By Matt Spetalnick
Reuter

LOS ANGELES — He was barely out of film school when he became the youngest moviemaker and first black ever nominated for one of Hollywood's highest accolades — the Oscar for best director.

But less than a year later, 25-year-old John Singleton — who keeps one foot in the 'hood (inner city neighbourhood) and the other in Beverly Hills — is out to prove that he hasn't been spoiled by success.

After taking the movie world by storm with his first film, Boyz n the Hood, the brash young director-screenwriter is about to release his

second project, Poetic Justice, starring pop superstar Janet Jackson in her screen debut.

"I think this film is a graduation from Boyz," he said in a recent interview. "It shows my growth as a filmmaker."

Indeed life has changed dramatically for Singleton since he burst onto the scene at age 22 with a script about his old gang-ridden South Central Los Angeles neighbourhood written as a film student at the University of Southern California.

He sold it to Columbia Pictures a month after graduation and convinced studio executives he was the only person who could direct it. Made for a mere \$6 mil-

lion, Boyz grossed more than six times as much as the box office. A major reason for its success was it attracted whites as well as blacks with its gritty tale of coming of age in a world of crime, drugs and disintegrating families.

With the instant fame generated by last year's Oscar nomination, Singleton has come of age as well.

He has learned to move with ease in the world of studio chieftains and enjoys talking shop with fellow directors such as Steven Spielberg, Francis Ford Coppola and Spike Lee. He owns a shiny new car and is considered hip enough to occasionally introduce rap music videos on MTV.

Although he still ventures back to south central to visit family and friends, he now lives in Baldwin Hills, a more upscale black neighbourhood.

Even as he relishes his first taste of success, Singleton insists he has not lost his street-smart perspective.

"That's what makes me special. I've got to maintain that edge," he said.

Like Boyz n the Hood, Singleton's latest project is filled with the raw images collected first-hand from a life of growing up on the mean streets.

But while Boyz was all hard-edged drama focussing on gun-packing gang members, Poetic Justice is being touted as an inner-city ro-

mance.

"I thought about what's happening to all the brothers out there," Singleton said. "They're killing each other. But what happens to a girl when her boyfriend gets murdered?"

It was Singleton's idea to cast Jackson in the lead role of Justice, a tough-talking hairdresser who writes poetry to cope with her loss.

He bristles at the inevitable questions about her shortage of acting experience. "Janet can do more than just sing. She's a renaissance woman," he declared.

But Singleton had to work hard to get her prepared. He assigned her classic films to watch, asked her to gain weight and had her work a

day in a south central beauty parlour.

Realising that growing up in a mansion with superstar brother Michael may have left her something less than streetwise, Singleton arranged a crash course for Jackson by introducing her to women he knew from the inner city.

Some Columbia executives fretted privately that \$13.5 million was too much to risk on the young filmmaker. But Singleton, speaking with the self-assurance of a director twice his age, insisted they were betting on a sure thing.

"This movie is gonna make money. It's in their best interest to do business with me," he said flatly. Singleton said he doesn't

expect the film's opening to be marred by the kind of gang-related violence that broke out at theatres around the country when Boyz arrived.

The day the verdicts were returned last year in the trial of four white police officers in the beating of Rodney King, Poetic Justice was shooting in suburban Simi Valley.

Singleton jumped into his car and rushed to the courthouse, where he vented his anger before the television cameras as riots erupted in South Central.

He chose to continue shooting straight through the riots, a decision representative of his single-minded approach to moviemaking.

Singleton grew up in an apartment next to a drive-in theatre and, from early childhood, was able to look out his window and see movies on a 70-foot (21-metre) screen. "It got my head going," he said.

He credits his father with teaching him to love a good story and binged on movies as an escape as he grew older. But he now sees the grim, graffiti-covered streets of his home turf as his main source of inspiration.

Away from the set, Singleton admits he's still a kid at heart. He reads comic books, plays video games and listens to loud rap music. Though still single, he became the father of a baby girl born late last year.

Underwater opera makes a splash

By Natasha Brown
Reuter

TROIA, Portugal — The audience at Michel Redolfi's underwater opera Crysallis don't just listen to it, they immerse themselves in it.

In a large swimming pool under a starry sky, music from a synthesiser wafts through the water from submerged speakers.

Two metres (six feet six inches) under water a percussionist in scuba-diving gear plays bronze chimes. A singer on the edge of the pool adds her voice, which is also projected through the underwater speakers.

"This is an underwater opera where you hear what is going on through your whole body — it is your whole body which will be listening," the French director tells the audience before the show begins.

The audience of 200 swim around the pool to find a comfortable position — realising that they can hear the sound only by submerging themselves.

Members of the audience

float round the pool on rubber mats duck underneath the surface for enhanced sound, or dive underwater to stare at the percussionist through the goggles on hand at the pool side.

Floating on the surface, the body absorbs the sonic vibrations from the 12 loudspeakers around the pool, the bones conduct the sounds like a tuning fork and the listening experience is enhanced and deepened, the programme explains.

"The audience are a little embarrassed at the beginning, it is very intimate. But then they get more comfortable and everyone calms down," said Susan Belling, who provides the vocals.

"It takes people to their deepest point within themselves. It is a meditation — a guided meditation," the American-born soprano told Reuters after a performance in Troia, on the coast 50 kilometres south of Lisbon.

"It is so unusual, at the end it is all floating and feeling connected. Vibrations are very special — sonic vibra-

tions are healing."

The warm water supports the body while the music envelops it and seems to massage it gently.

"For one hour the music puts the audience into science fiction," said Redolfi.

"It is like in a dream — but it is real so it's a sort of utopia," said Redolfi, who is director of the Nice-based Centre for Sound Creation (CIRM) and has been directing underwater concerts since 1981.

Crysallis had its premiere in Grenoble in November last year.

Percussionist Alex Grillo, who has been working with Redolfi since 1989, remains underwater throughout the performance, tapping out on the bronze chimes which vibrate through the water.

Belling remains on dry land, sometimes appearing on the diving board to sing into the microphone.

Although the performance is described as an "opera", there is no traditional operatic story line — more of a symphony of various moods.

"Something between cosmic and the songs of whales," said the Lisbon daily Publico.

Participants drift off into a trance-like state on the soothing waves of music.

"Very relaxing," said one woman.

Those who remained on land missed the point.

"I could hardly hear anything," said one man who forgot his swimming costume.

Redolfi's other work includes recording the sounds of landscapes all over the world — from Brazil's Amazon jungle to Death Valley in the United States — and he designed the sound system for Monaco's pavilion at Spain's 1992 Expo in Seville.

He said the biggest problem in Troia, the second time the opera has been performed, was heating the water to a comfortable temperature for the audience to withstand 66 minutes of sonic vibrations.

For his next underwater opera he plans "something very large, in the open sea."

Shakespeare thrives in Alabama cotton country

MONTGOMERY, Alabama (R) — The Alabama Shakespeare Festival is thriving in a region better known historically for high cotton than high culture.

It has also carved a new path for itself by combining traditional stagings of Shakespeare's plays with modern American works and a more recent emphasis on regional plays from the southern United States, especially ones on black Americans.

Comfortably ensconced in a \$21.5 million complex, the festival is the centrepiece of a cultural park named for multimillionaire Alabama industrialist Winton "Red" Blount.

Perhaps equally comforting at a time when the arts community fears government and corporate funding cuts, the festival operates in the black on a \$5.9 million annual budget.

The festival drew more than 209,000 people last year, a 33,000 increase from the prior year. Organisers expect attendance to show another

healthy gain when this season, which began in March, closes on Aug. 7.

In May, the festival opened its production of Henry IV, Part II, currently running in repertory with Henry IV, Part I.

The plays are part of an ambitious project to stage all of the Shakespeare histories in chronological order, beginning with Richard II last season. Next season will see a new production of Henry V.

The acting company has won wide critical acclaim from newspapers ranging from USA Today to the Boston Globe. Theatre Week magazine called the Alabama Shakespeare Festival's plays "beautifully acted, smartly paced, and had fine production values on a par with the best regional theatres."

It has been a stellar rise for an acting company which opened in 1972 in a high school auditorium without air conditioning in Anniston, Alabama, drew 3,000 people to three productions and lost \$34 on an \$8,000 budget. As

recently as 1982, the company ran a \$130,000 deficit.

The festival found its angel when Blount, postmaster general in the Richard Nixon administration, stepped in with a \$21.5 million gift which was the largest ever bestowed on an American theatre company.

The acting company moved to Montgomery — the historic city where the southern Confederacy was formed and where Martin Luther King Jr began his crusade against segregation — and reopened in December 1985 in the New Cultural Park.

Since then, the company has thrived by offering a mix of Shakespeare and 20th-century classics such as Tennessee Williams' Cat On A Hot Tin Roof and Thornton Wilder's Our Town.

However, artistic director Kent Thompson felt the festival had become too careful with "nothing to distinguish what we were doing from anyone else."

His answer was adding southern regional plays to the

mix, especially ones based on African-American experience such as Lorraine Hansberry's famed A Raisin In The Sun.

Hitting closer to home, the festival has produced Miss Evers' Boys, David Feldshub's drama based on a true incident in which black men were used without their knowledge in a bizarre medical study on syphilis in nearby Tuskegee, Alabama.

The company also commissioned new works from five playwrights under a new southern writers' project and last year got a \$1 million grant from the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Resident Theatre Initiative to expand its cultural diversity.

The grant will be used to involve more African-Americans on stage, in company management and in the audience.

Thompson said theatre-goers should henceforth expect the Alabama Shakespeare Festival to operate with "one foot in the past and one foot in the present."

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The doctor went to the U.S. to specialise in maxillo-facial surgery, which involves the use of dental implants, problems of the articulation of the jawbone and correction of anomalies and traumas related to the jawbone and the face. "I realised just how much I did not know," he explained. After seven years of work at Harvard and other American universities, he returned to Egypt to practice what he had learned.

Dr. Hosni specialises in the bony structure of the face; plastic surgery deals with other tissues. "It is imperative that all of the facial bones be in perfect condition to maintain general health and avoid deterioration that could give rise to problems such as migraines, digestive disorders or speech impediments," the doctor explained.

Implants are thin, often perforated, metal cylinders that are inserted into a cavity made in the jawbone. After

insertion, the gum is stitched up. Within three to four months, bone surrounds the cylinder and grips it perfectly. If the cylinder is perforated, it is possible to see bony matter penetrating through and anchoring the implant even more firmly to the jawbone.

The hollow cylinder houses a pivot. Systems supporting the false teeth can be screwed or locked into it. The cylinder/pivot system is extremely firm and, if necessary, can replace a whole set of teeth.

Implants are often used in cases where there are not enough molars for a bridge to be fitted. One or two implants enable false teeth to be fitted in replacement of molars. This ensures normal mastication on each side, which means there is no deterioration on the side where there was previously no mastication.

Dr. Hosni has a 98-per cent success rate with implants on the lower jaw and a 65-per cent success rate on the upper

jaw. "I am looking to increase the success rate for the upper jaw by a preliminary graft of bone onto the upper jaw, which is often very thin," Dr. Hosni added.

Implants had a rocky start. "Fifteen years ago dental implants were actually very problematic," he explained. "A lot has changed recently." He says problems of rejection no longer exist. "Pure titanium is an exceptionally bio-compatible substance not used in surgery 10 years ago," he explained. "Surgical steel implants were often rejected, but with titanium we no longer have problems."

Dental implants are not the only area of intervention for Dr. Hosni. Bone grafts can correct a prognathous profile, or badly aligned jaws. This technique also involves endoscopic examination of the jawbone articulation.


Stress often causes people to clench their jaws and grind their teeth, resulting in wear and damage of the articula-

tion. Temporal-mandibular articulation controls the movement of the jawbones for mastication and connects the lower jaw to the skull.

Surgery on the temporal-mandibular articulation is becoming more frequent. "We have the instruments required to perform this surgery in Egypt now, and have conducted one successful operation," Dr. Hosni said. "One of the important advantages of these new techniques is that they do leave scars, as in the past."

Temporal-mandibular articulation is often the source of migraines, whose diagnosis was not previously possible. "In many countries, people were given valium after being wrongly diagnosed," the doctor said. "Now, with the C.T. Scan, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and arthroscopy, this articulation can be minutely examined."

The articulation is smaller than the one in a finger, and



Using modern acquisition computers, magnetic imaging and archae-

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surgery on the bones of**



After surgery, the patient's features are balanced.

Gradual progress in the fight against AIDS

PARIS — The National Agency for Research on AIDS (ANRS), set up in 1988, is the kingly in action to fight this disease which has been declared a "national priority" area since the epidemic started to spread. (In France, there are nearly 22,000 AIDS victims and about 200,000 HIV positive patients. In Paris, one death in three in men aged 25-44 is due to AIDS).

The ANRS has been set three missions: To mobilise researchers, to evaluate research programmes and to coordinate scientific decisions and the means available.

Three hundred teams are involved in research programmes (compared with 200 in 1987). Their work concerns all areas, from the development of vaccines and drugs, to epidemiological supervision, and includes setting up a post-hospital network for clinical tests.

From one laboratory to another, knowledge progresses day by day, both in tests and in diagnosis, as well as in understanding the way the virus acts and its numerous clinical symptoms.

The National Agency for Research on AIDS (ANRS) is the kingpin in the fight against the disease

for their development in patients whose immune defence systems have been weakened, or had collapsed (tuberculosis, retinitis, toxoplasmosis, etc.).

Gene therapy

Twenty therapeutic tests, including three on a European scale, are now being carried out using a new generation of antiviral substances and a combination of drugs which could inhibit the HIV or slow down its development.

Many tricky problems remain to be solved as researchers come up against the "variability" of the diabolical virus which appears to make fun of their knowledge and their wisdom. So, some scientists are looking for more revolutionary methods.

One of these is inspired by the work of American scientists (who have established that certain white blood corpuscles act as effective adversaries of the virus) and the results obtained, in their area of research by two Paris

cells. In this way, they manage to obtain "complete remission" in 10 per cent of their patients and they note considerable improvement in a further 25 per cent of patients.

Using this American research as a starting point and copying this anti-cancer technique, French specialists also plan to use huge amounts of white blood corpuscles, which have been "activated" and proliferated in a laboratory, to overcome the AIDS virus.

This method could be used while waiting for sufficient progress to be made in the promising application of "gene therapy". Several teams of French researchers are working on it, with the hope of being able to alter the genetic inheritance of the cells, so as to make them resistant to the virus.

According to Professor Willy Rozenbaum, from the Rothschild Hospital in Paris, who detected the first case of

AIDS in France, in 1981, in genetic intervention which will put an end to the HIV but, while waiting for the great leap forward in the fight undertaken, a succession of small steps will make it possible to gain a little more ground over the enemy, every day.

"We can hope (for lack of a vaccine or genetic manipulation which would settle the problem for good) that the disease will be controlled in the ten coming years", Prof. Rozenbaum declares.

That is to say, that AIDS will have become a disease from which one can escape on condition one follows permanent treatment and continuous medical supervision, as, for instance, with diabetes. People will have to "learn to live with AIDS" while waiting for it to be vanquished for good, as has been done for other viruses which were just as fearsome in their dry and age — L'Acquaintance En France.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

PRODUCE DEPT.
By Dorothy B. Martin

[illegible]

A 20x20 cryptogram grid. The first row contains numbers 1 through 20. The last row contains numbers 101 through 120. The grid is filled with a complex pattern of black squares and white squares, representing a cryptogram.

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CRYPTOGRAMS

1. ULNEL HOJE-UKY-LSNKY BASNEEDS
JOBA JUKULD AZ LZ ZOA UKY LSNK UKY
HUSD NA. —By Eugene T. Malesska

2. NINZNIEK WKIOZP WKIHZG MDCSAB SR
APCAVZS, BIG SPORTS. DIM THINKZ SR
LIVZ SBZ SZIL. —By Ed Huddleston

3. ORRS FRI XCEBFZ XMI TRFZOA IR IEC
TMIWVC. WK ARM GWA. RV ARM'OO XCDRG
KIMDS 2F AKKICVZWA. —By Gordon Miller

4. BPERL BAKERY SPICAL PSSKPAK
SAKIINKA IYPE NI IPCIKK. —By Barbara J. Rupp

Diagramless 19 x 19. By James Barrick

1 Neuron or argon	24 Give a meal to	42 Short beard	50 Baffly twin
2 Thrust	25 Gave to the	43 Courtier	51 Sooty
3 Allowance	26 Courtier	44 At the — of	52 False
4 "Dime Comedy"	27 Jai —	45 A hat	53 Parting words
5 Post	28 Norse god	46 Gargling talk	54 Reversion
6 Hunter	29 Saying	47 Practice for a	57 "All the world's
7 Constellation	30 MCDarney or	48 Boult	58 "—"
8 Lab compound	31 Mure	50 Thrill of	59 Makes a
9 "Alibi" is one	32 Commander	51 Move swiftly and	60 mistake
10 Finally	33 Howard or	52 engerogically	67 Responsibility-
11 Great	34 Reagan	53 Wine can	71 Matched
12 Sear	35 Gaming-	54 —do-well	
	36 Acquainted words		

DOWN			
1 Shine	15 Fraying ice sheet	30 Christians	52 Persian tarry
2 Flung prefix	16 h z's	32 Awkwardly stiff	55 Pairs
3 P—p	17 Arm of the sea	35 Jumped	58 Sprits
4 J—ion	20 Beret	37 Hospital worker	58 Punta del
5 "O" in grammar	21 Fair mode	39 Unlashing	61 —munk-laps
6 "Do — others —"	22 Crucial	40 Brightest seller	63 Sign
7 Part of a group	23 Grinner of	41 Sell out	61 Calc cane
7 Present	24 gran	42 Set sail	62 Terminates
9 Kind of water	25 Miles across	43 United	82 Items for rowers
10 Greek letter	25 Radact	46 —cypria	84 Monster
11 —gore	26 Chink of turf	48 Ship of 1452	85 Aerie

SOLUTIONS

PUZZLES

Arrowwords

1. Swelter
2. Rumba
3. Ass

Russian caviar area faces pollution threat

By Anatoly Verbin
Reuter

ASTRAKHAN, Russia — The Astrakhan gas and chemical plant, rising from a labyrinth of pipes in the southern Russian steppe, was once hailed by Soviet propaganda as a model of 20th century construction.

Today, ecologists look at the vast complex and question the cost of keeping the region supplied with fuel at prices that would be the envy of many other areas.

The remote facility, 140 kilometres north of the Caspian Sea, has a worrying history of minor environmental mishaps.

General neglect by unqualified workers, many of whom were prisoners doing forced labour, was blamed for chemical leaks that turned the grass yellow for miles around in 1987, only a year after construction was completed.

So far, there has been no major pollution in the area near the mouth of the River Volga — famed for its black caviar and sturgeon. But ecologists say it could only be a matter of time before their worst fears are realised.

"There are thousands of (ecological) mines planted there," said Yuri Chuiikov, Astrakhan's senior official in charge of environmental protection.

The plant, whose potential annual output of gasoline, diesel fuel and liquefied gas could satisfy the whole of Scandinavia for five years, is the backbone of the local economy. It has 35,000 workers, including those employed by related enterprises.

Owned by Astrakhangazprom, a unit of the Russian gas monopoly Gazprom, it was built between 1976 and 1986 and hastily inaugurated in time for a visit to Astrakhan by then Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov.

The decade of construction was trumpeted by communist propaganda as an example to be followed elsewhere. But Mr. Chuiikov said the long-term effects of the plant's activity had not yet been studied properly.

Last month, one worker was killed and two badly poisoned when hydrogen sulphide leaked from an underground storage area because of their own carelessness, Mr. Chuiikov said.

The incident took place at one of 15 caverns made by small nuclear explosions. The secret explosions, aimed at creating storage space for gas condensate and liquid with molten residue, were conducted across the former Soviet Union.

Mr. Chuiikov said that, unlike in the other parts of the country, the Astrakhan caverns, formed at

a depth of 1,000 metres, had failed to keep their shape.

"They have been shrinking in size and lost their volume," he said, adding that some had been taken out of action.

Mr. Chuiikov said there had been no increase in radiation levels so far but he was concerned by the threat of air and water pollution.

The plant was not exceeding maximum permitted levels only because it was not working at full capacity.

"This deposit can and should be used. But each deposit of natural resources should be used intelligently and this is not the case here," the ecologist said.

Astrakhan Governor Anatoly Guzhvin said the plant's failure to meet ecological requirements and its ageing equipment prevented it from producing more.

The plant's first, and so far only, operational line produced 2.5 billion cubic metres of gas, 1.5 million tonnes of gas condensate and one million tonnes of sulphur in 1992, according to the Interfax News Agency.

It also produced 227,000 tonnes of petrol and the same amount of diesel fuel. Alexander Saushin, the plant's commercial director, declined to confirm the Interfax figures, saying they were a commercial secret.

An advertising brochure put the plant's current capacity at about double the Interfax output figures.

Mr. Saushin said a second operational line was 90 per cent ready but the collapse of the centralised Soviet economy had prevented it from being completed.

"The Soviet Union has collapsed. There are no more old ministries (which used to finance the construction) and we are left eye to eye with Plant-2," he said in an interview.

President Boris Yeltsin and Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin have promised to help but so far "we have not got a kopeck," Mr. Saushin said.

Moscow-based Gazprom denied the plant the right to look for foreign investors, saying it would find investment funds itself. The plant is owed some four billion roubles (\$4 million) by customers outside Russia.

Mr. Saushin stressed the significance of the plant's cheap fuel supplies for the local economy.

Motorists here pay only half as much as in Moscow and many other regions, while low energy prices have also prevented bread and milk prices from soaring.

Governor Guzhvin said the plant's administration was reluctant to raise its prices as it would immediately hit the welfare of its workers and their families.

Castro shuns 'mad' reform, prefers cautious change

By Pascal Fletcher
Reuter

HAVANA — Cuba's president Fidel Castro, declaring he will neither cling to ideological dogma nor rush ahead with "mad" reforms, has outlined practical but cautious measures to try to pull the island out of economic decline.

He has said that the government was opening up more of the communist-ruled Caribbean island's economy to foreign investment and would remove a ban on Cubans owning convertible currency. This last move was eagerly awaited by many Cubans.

Mr. Castro, speaking in the eastern city of Santiago de Cuba, said the bleak economic reality facing his country had forced the government to make "concessions" as far as strict interpretation of socialist ideology was concerned.

"Life and reality... oblige us to do what we would never have done otherwise," said the Cuban leader, who was wearing his familiar olive-green uniform.

He gave as an example a Cuban invitation for foreign oil firms to explore for oil on the island.

In a two-hour speech, Mr. Castro made clear the main aim of the proposed reforms was to channel more hard currency into the depleted state treasury and to try to guarantee the economic survival of Cuba's one-party socialist system.

"That means that we won't be dogmatic, neither dogmatic nor mad," he said. He added "madness" would be to follow the example of the former Soviet Union, where reforms originally aimed at improving socialism there had ended up by destroying it.

"We mustn't take desperate or adventurous steps," he said.

Foreign diplomats in Havana said the latest measures appeared to indicate the Cuban leadership was increasingly prepared to move away from the kind of rigid socialist economic model that had once existed in the former Soviet Union.

But it was equally clear the Cuban reforms fell well short of introducing western-style market-orientated policies. They addressed the island's economic problems, not its political system.

"However difficult the circumstances are, we can't destroy

the party, the state, the government or the history of the country," Mr. Castro said.

He made his speech at a ceremony marking the 40th anniversary of a 1953 guerrilla attack led by him. The Moncada barracks attack failed but was the prelude to Cuba's 1959 revolution that ousted right-wing dictator Fulgencio Batista.

Other measures announced by Mr. Castro included allowing more Cubans living abroad to visit family members on the island and boosting tourism and other sectors of the economy that earn valuable hard currency.

"Increasing our hard currency income is a vital necessity for the country," he said.

This need was all the more urgent because Cuba's imports this year would fall to a mere \$1.7 billion compared with just over \$8 billion in 1989, the last year of normal trade with the former Soviet Union, Mr. Castro said.

He added the "tremendous blow" of the loss of trade and aid ties with the former Soviet Bloc had been made worse this year by a disastrous sugar harvest and a fall in world prices for many Cuban exports like nickel and seafood.

Referring to the widespread popular expectation that had surrounded his speech, he said he had no miracle cures to offer for the economic crisis, which is squeezing Cuba's nearly 11 million people with shortages of fuel, food and consumer goods.

He acknowledged that allowing Cubans to own hard currency could create privileges "that do not fit our strict ideas of equality."

"Such inequalities could occur because not all Cubans would have access to hard currency either through their work or through remittances from family members abroad."

"We don't have any choice but to adapt our minds to these realities," Mr. Castro said.

He said the government intended to create and eventually intend to create a convertible national currency. But until this happened, Cubans would be allowed to spend the hard currency they had at special shops designated for this.

Foreign diplomats said the government would probably be able to recoup at least part of the estimated thousands of dollars circulating illegally in the black market economy.

UNDP issues 1993 Human Development Report

By Kathrine Rath
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Wednesday published the Arabic version of the Human Development Report for 1993. The report was presented at a ceremony held at the University of Jordan by Dr. Ali Attiga, assistant administrator and regional director for the Bureau of Arab States, UNDP, New York.

The regional launching of the report took place under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Bin Talal who gave a keynote statement. Other speakers were Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, Dr. Sabah-Eddin Bakjaji, under secretary-general of the United Nations and executive secretary of ESCWA, Leila Sharaf, member of the Upper House of Parliament, who was representing the Arab Thought Forum, and Dr. Ziad Fariz, minister of planning.

The Human Development Report for 1993, which was the fourth annual report issued by

the UNDP, has been prepared by a team of top economists led by Mahbub Ul Haq, former finance and planning minister of Pakistan, now special adviser to the UNDP administrator; it is published by Oxford University Press.

The 1993 report focuses on the importance of popular and democratic participation for human development. According to Dr. Attiga, the report "puts people at the very centre of development." It stresses the need for investment in human resources and for people's participation in their own development.

The report reveals that "fewer than 10 per cent of the world's people participate fully in political, economic, social and cultural life," which implies that the vast majority of the population lacks control over their own lives.

"Jobless growth," exclusion of minorities and centralised power are cited as major targets for change by the report.

The report was last month published in English and French.

Yakutian community haunted by nuclear past

By Fiona Fleck
Reuter

TAAS-YURAKH, Russia — People in this remote, cattle-herding community remember vividly the day 17 years ago, when a team of geologists from Moscow swooped down in helicopters.

"They told us a series of nuclear explosions would take place near our settlement in the interests of the national economy," said Nikolai Danilov, the 55-year-old head of administration in the settlement, part of Yakutia in northeastern Russia.

"They told us to leave our homes and go out into the street with our children and cattle at 6 a.m. on Oct. 5, 1976," he said. "Suddenly we felt the ground under our feet shake violently — it was like an earthquake — it came in three waves and was over in a few seconds."

"We weren't afraid because we thought our government and our (Communist) Party would never do anything to harm us," he said. "We returned to our homes. Everything seemed fine."

The people were told the explosions were safe. They recall the assurances with resentment and a deep sense of betrayal.

After the explosion and fire at the Chernobyl nuclear reactor in 1986 — which the Ukrainian authorities say claimed 8,000 lives — they began to fear that they too could be the victims of

radioactive contamination.

Teams of experts sent to the area found radiation levels in Taas-Yurakh "normal" and no unusual incidence of cancer or other illnesses associated with radiation.

The results did not reassure the locals.

"We should be granted a similar status to the victims of Chernobyl," said Mr. Danilov. "Maybe this generation will be fine. But how do we know future generations will be healthy?"

Seven underground nuclear explosions were carried out up to seven kilometres from Taas-Yurakh to measure oil and gas deposits there, according to Lieutenant Anatoly Chomcheyev, head of civil defence in Yakutia.

Lt. Chomcheyev is leading an official inquiry into the environmental consequences of 12 underground explosions carried out between 1973 and 1987 in Yakutia, a region covering one-fifth of the Russian federation.

In 1990 the Ministry of Atomic Energy — traditionally one of the most secretive branches of Soviet government — made a spectacular public confession that 115 underground nuclear explosions had been carried out in the former Soviet Union between 1964 and 1987.

They were ordered by 11 different ministries for industrial purposes — to increase oil and gas yields, to make underground silos

to store gas condensate, for coal and iron extraction and for seismicological experiments.

Experts like Lt. Chomcheyev are now trying to piece together what happened to assess the scale of the contamination and the effects on the health of the local populations.

"There is no point requesting official information from the ministries," said Lt. Chomcheyev, who believes the key may lie with the Defence Ministry, assigned to carry out the explosions.

The official view in the former Soviet Union was that nuclear explosions up to 2,000 metres underground were safe because they were conducted in sparsely populated areas and usually surface radiation levels registered "normal."

But in 1974 one explosion, code-named "focus", which took place five kilometres from the diamond mining town of Udachny in north Yakutia was unsuccessful.

The blast was too close to the surface and scattered earth and radioactive particles into the air.

Some people still remember seeing the giant black cloud, ringed by Defence Ministry helicopters, as it was blown by the wind north towards the Arctic port of Tiksi.

The explosions were known officially as "peaceful" because they were used for "industrial purposes". But some experts be-

lieve they may also have been used for unsanctioned nuclear weapons testing.

"In 1963 the United States and the Soviet Union agreed to ban nuclear tests for military purposes apart from in Semipalatinsk (Kazakhstan) and on Novaya Zemlya," said Boris Golubov, head of a Moscow-based parliamentary group investigating underground nuclear explosions.

"Nuclear explosions in space, on the ground, in water, and in the air were banned," he said.

"The only place left was underground — and that's where 'peaceful nuclear explosions' were carried out in the interests of the

national economy". No one will confirm this, but it is possible the military used the explosions for nuclear experiments," he said.

Yakutia, one of many regions targeted for the explosions, was regarded as particularly suitable because it is sparsely populated and covered in permafrost, beneath which there is a dense layer of virtually impenetrable clay.

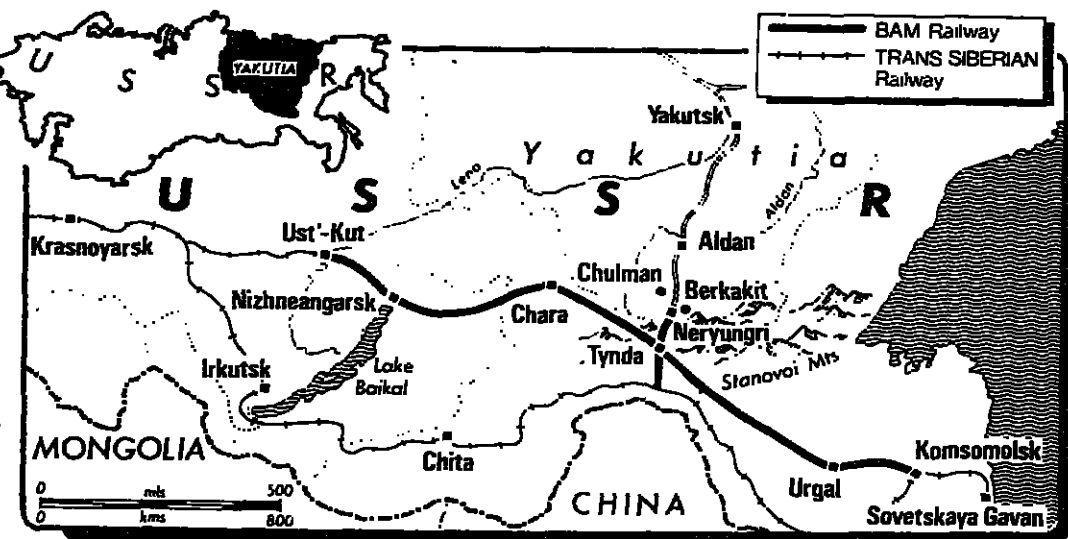
"They thought the radiation from blasts up to 2,000 metres below ground could not possibly seep to the surface," said Mr. Golubov. "But up to 10 years later in some places dangerous levels of radiation appeared on

the surface." In Yakutia there are two danger spots. One is a few kilometres from Taas-Yurakh and measures 2,000 microrentgen an hour — more than 300 times the permitted level.

It was recently sealed in a cement sarcophagus and fenced off with a warning sign: "danger — radiation."

The Japanese and Yakutian governments have a joint agreement to develop the oil and gas field. But a project to build a pipe to Japan was shelved.

The Taas-Yurakh field is still not fully operational.



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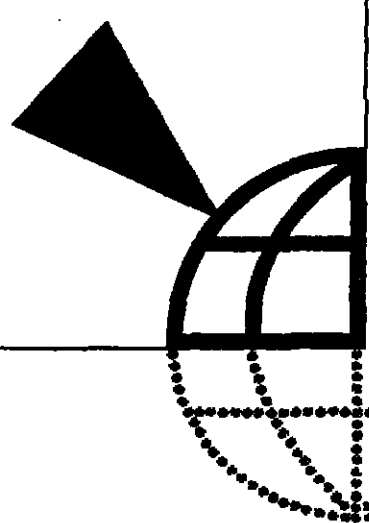
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Economy

FAO report says farmers hard hit by drop in world agricultural prices

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Farmers have been hard hit by the 26 per cent drop in agricultural export prices over the past 12 years and their lot is not expected to improve before the end of the century, according to a report published Tuesday.

The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) said farmers in developing countries, who suffer most from falling agricultural prices, have seen their prices drop 39 per cent against 19 per cent for richer nations.

Between 1980 and 1992, the price drop effected mostly coffee and sugar — which were down 70 and 60 per cent respectively — and rubber which dropped nearly 50 per cent, according to the report.

"This trend is having dire consequences in developing nations, preventing their economies from earning the foreign exchange they need for their overall development," said FAO Director General Edward Saouma.

Advances in agricultural technology are primarily responsible for the drop in prices between 1980 and 1982, according to the report.

Agricultural production will outpace demand, which is expected to grow by only 1.6 per cent during this decade against 2.0 per cent for the 1980s. Production is projected to decline only slightly, from 1.8 per cent annually in the 1980s to 1.7 per cent in the 1990s.

Rich countries' growth in demand is slowing due to low population growth and glut on the market while growth in developing countries is on the rise because of economic expansion and the greater responsiveness of demand to income growth, the report said.

The FAO also reported that food and agricultural commodities is expected to decline from 2.8 per cent annually in the 1980s to 1.3 per cent in the 1990s, well below estimates for merchandise trade.

World coffee output in 1992-93 was forecast to reach 57 tonnes, a six per cent drop from the previous year, while cocoa production is expected to rise by nearly four per cent to 2.38 million tonnes.

Sugar output was projected to edge up to a record 116.5 million tonnes while cotton production would fall, according to the report.

Gore sees government job cuts exceeding 100,000

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. Vice President Al Gore predicted the Clinton administration's effort to streamline government would cost more than 100,000 federal workers their jobs, the Washington Post reported Wednesday.

The newspaper quoted Mr. Gore as saying the workforce cuts were inevitable and would exceed President Bill Clinton's initial pledge to trim the bureaucracy by 100,000 jobs.

"I think there is general agreement that in certain categories there are too many people in the federal government," Mr. Gore was quoted as saying at a lunch with Washington Post reporters and editors Tuesday.

He said the overall reduction would be "somewhat larger... than the 100,000 we originally talked about."

Mr. Gore is heading the administration's national performance review, an initiative to make bureaucracy more efficient, which is due to be delivered to Mr. Clinton by Sept. 7.

The newspaper said Mr. Gore did not specify where the job cuts would be made, but said they would be carried out through attrition.

Growing anger in Yugoslavia as inflation bites deep

BELGRADE (R) — The elderly, well-dressed man sobs quietly at the back of the Belgrade store after discovering he would need his entire monthly pension to buy a new toothbrush.

A woman in her 70s fills her basket in a supermarket with goods and sneaks out past a cashier busy with another customer. Bystanders notice, but say nothing.

Two businessmen out for lunch in a restaurant order their meals. By the time they come to pay, the price has risen by 50 per cent.

These and similar stories appear regularly in the Belgrade press as people in rump Yugoslavia try to cope with nightmarish inflation of 20 per cent a day, result of civil war, sanctions and mismanagement by the communist government.

The growing crisis is causing bewilderment and growing anger among a population accustomed to periods of economic hardship during four decades of communist rule.

The inflation rate is already being described as the worst since that in Germany between the wars, when the mark fell at one point to 4,200,000,000,000 to the dollar.

Last week the government mint, which has been working around the clock for months printing increasingly worthless money, issued a new 50-million-dinar note, worth just \$3 at the black market rate.

The previous highest denomination was a five-million-dinar note, now worth about 20 U.S. cents. When it was issued in May it was worth \$12.25.

Average salaries have slumped to between \$5 and \$10 in real terms. Pensions are around \$4.

On Wednesday the Belgrade daily Politika reported that a pair of men's shoes imported from Greece was on sale in the central department store for \$460. A kilogramme of lemons was going for \$7.

Last week a National Bank official was reported as saying a redenomination of the dinar, dropping three noughts from the currency, could be expected in late September.

It would be the fourth redenomination since World War II, the third since 1990. The last one took place on July 1.

There have also been three devaluations of the dinar this year, the last, by over 80 per cent, a week ago.

Some of Belgrade's larger stores have already introduced their own unofficial redenomination, dropping three zeroes, as their computers and cash registers cannot cope with so many noughts.

Shops change the prices at least twice a day, in the morning and the afternoon, moving them up anywhere between 100 and 700 per cent, Tanjug News Agency reported Tuesday.

In many shops this is an empty exercise since by the afternoon most shelves are empty as people buy everything in sight while their money has some value, or speculators snap up goods for resale at a profit.

The crisis is increasingly driving ordinary people to deal in currency on the black market.

A 40-year-old architect who tried it out reported earning a profit of \$12 in his currency in a few hours of buying and selling German marks for dinars on a busy downtown street.

Such easy pickings have not surprisingly attracted a growing number of hard-core criminals and introduced an element of violence in a city awash with arms from two years of civil war.

One man, who declined to give his name, said that while dealing in a popular money-changing street he had been approached by two men who pulled guns and demanded his takings.

When he in turn pulled out a hand grenade and threatened to let it off, the two gunmen left muttering warnings that he would be in trouble if he showed his face again.

The crisis has already prompted thousands of car, metal and construction workers to go on strike, and unions have called a general strike for Aug. 5.

An organisation representing Serbia's 1.2 million pensioners, who are worst hit by the inflation, is threatening to bring the elderly out into the streets in protests that would include refusing to pay rent, water or electricity bills.

But a 68-year-old woman pensioner, recalling previous attempts to organise mass protests, commented:

"I don't understand what people are waiting for. To think that in a city to two million, not even 50,000 will come out onto the streets to protest. All that remains is for us to die. But we won't even have enough money for a funeral."

Eastern Europe goes up in smoke

LONDON (AFP) — Poland and Hungary have by far the heaviest smokers in the world, with an average 2,500 cigarettes consumed per person per year, according to a report published here Tuesday.

Other countries in eastern Europe are prominent in the great stake, notably the former Yugoslavia with an average of 1,924 cigarettes per year, though the southern Pacific region, with an average of 2,126, edges slightly ahead of the eastern European average of 2,073.

The Euromonitor market report, based on 1991 figures, ranks Bulgaria in fourth place in Europe (1,880), followed by the Czechs and Slovaks (1,707) and Russia (1,700).

North America and the European Community tie with an average of 1,751 cigarettes each.

Cleaner lungs are found in South America, with 901 cigarettes smoked per year per person, Asia (897), the Middle East (723), North Africa (526) and Central America (408). In last place comes sub-Saharan Africa, with an average of 267.

N. America supports free trade links with South East Asia

SINGAPORE (AFP) — The United States and Canada said Wednesday they support links between evolving free trade areas in North America and South East Asia.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Winston Lord said both the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) aim to keep markets open.

"They are both consistent with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade," Mr. Lord said at a joint news conference at the end of the Association of South East Asian Nations' (ASEAN) annual dialogue with its main trading partners.

"I think that together on both sides of the Pacific we can work to relate NAFTA to APEC and AFTA," Mr. Lord said, referring to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, which was formed in 1989 to promote free trade and economic cooperation.

ASEAN groups Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Its main trading partners are Australia, Canada, the European Community, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea and the United States.

Japan tells builders to cut dubious spending

TOKYO (R) — The Japanese government has urged builders to be more open with their tax declarations to cut down illegal political donations, officials said.

Construction companies wanting to curry favour with politicians who might give them large public works contracts have been central to a series of scandals that have brought down some of the mightiest figures in Japan.

And at the core of their illegal political donations is a tax system which allows companies to fudge the gifts as "unspecified expenditure" so long as they don't seek tax deductions.

An official at the National Tax Administration Agency said the agency had asked builders to cut their unspecified expenditure. He gave no further details.

The construction ministry is considering following suit, a ministry official said.

"We are considering ways for builders to regain public trust and we think a cut in unspecified spending could be one of them. But we are not yet ready to reveal specifics," he said.

The slush-funds are not just for politicians. Builders also give gifts to people living around construction sites and industry analysts said these grassroots donations would be harder to give up.

The biggest fish to be caught in the construction industry's bribery net is Shin Kanemaru, currently on trial for not paying tax on 3.3 billion yen (\$31 million) in donations. Much of the money is said to have come from building firms.

Riyadh extends customs exemption for cement

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia, facing cement shortages due to a post-Gulf war construction boom, has extended by six months a custom exemption for cement imports.

The Saudi cabinet, chaired by King Fahd, agreed during the weekly meeting to extend an exemption period introduced in February by another six months.

Experts said Saudi cement consumption, which reached 14.5 million tonnes in 1992 when limited imports were allowed, was expected to rise to 16.5 million this year.

Six of Saudi Arabia's cement producers plan expansion projects to boost capacity to 22 million tonnes from 14 million.

Saudi Arabian cement firms have been reporting large profits since the end of the Gulf war in March 1991 as the kingdom, the world's largest oil producer and exporter, started several huge development and construction projects.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY JULY 29, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Go out of your way to do something nice for allies and you will cement better relationships with them. Repay social visits in the evening after you have improved your personal appearance.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Pitch in and get those usual activities attended to and in the best possible manner so you can get off to some new activities now presenting themselves.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) A business matter with another person requires that you look to your own assets to see just what you can do to make a joint harmonious arrangement.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You feel an associate is acting in too flighty a fashion but don't draw away but be patient with this individual for there is much to gain by so doing.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Get out and tell that influential ally of the good ideas you have for advancing your joint interests in the future and get desired support.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You want to have a good time today but friends you wanted to be a part of entertainment have other ideas so go your own way and see them later.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Your own judgment is good and you know just who to see to gain backing you desire so don't let a critical partner keep you from following through.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Your money matters are in a fluctuating state so be on the lookout for ways to handle them so you will get the greatest benefit from new aspects.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Sudden action that is unexpected by a partner can throw you for a loop unless you adjust yourself quickly to this new situation presenting itself.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You have some new ideas or plans that are all right if you can utilise and put them into active use in your everyday activities, interests.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Try to get acquaintances and loyal companions to get along better and this you can do by exerting your own special charm for pleasant togetherness.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Agreement between you and an outside associate should be honoured now to the letter as well as to the spirit even though it will take an effort to do so.

Air France, Continental announce alliance

HOUSTON, Texas (AFP) — Air France and the U.S.-based Continental Airlines announced Tuesday they would form an alliance that would involve coordinated schedules in hopes of attracting new customers.

Under the agreement, the airlines would share terminals and advertising costs, and would issue single tickets to make it easier for customers to connect to Air France through Continental's hubs in Newark, New Jersey and Houston, Texas.

"We are strategically very well placed to cooperate," said Bernard Attali, chairman of Groupe Air France in a statement. "The Air France group and Continental both have important domestic and international networks."

The agreement will begin to become effective on Nov. 1 and will be fully implemented by April 1, 1994, the statement said.

Other airlines have come up with similar arrangements. Northwest and KLM Royal Dutch Airlines have signed a similar accord, as has US Air and British Airways.

Continental's alliance with Air France will give it access to 106 airports in Europe, while Air France will gain 197 destinations in 28 countries served by Continental.

Without the agreement, Air France, which like other airlines has had serious financial difficulties, would be virtually shut out of the U.S. market, analysts said.

Continental, which is strong in the United States and in Asia, has had limited access to European airports, the two companies said.

The alliance with Continental will give Air France access to the Newark airport, outside New York City, as well as other airports across the country where Continental aircraft may land.

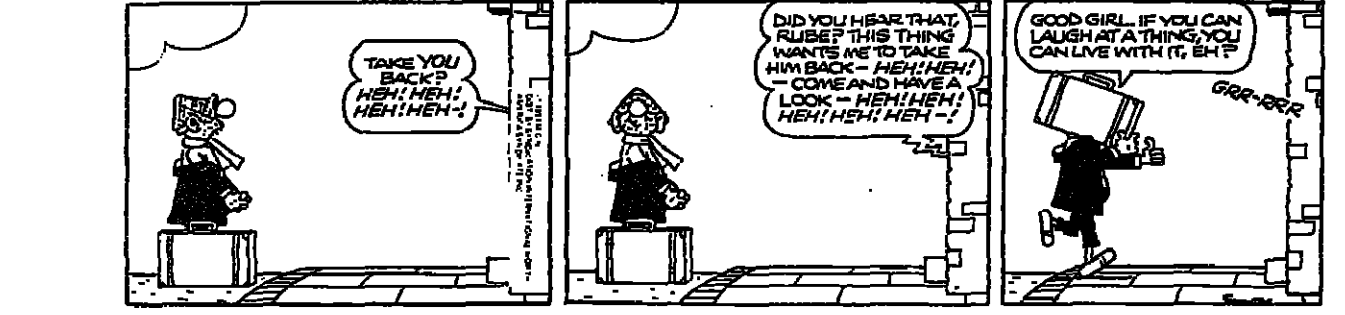
The French Transport and Tourism Minister Bernard Bosson confirmed earlier in Paris that there was a "new plan to get Air France moving again" despite the deteriorating financial situation of other worldwide airlines.

Continental Airlines emerged from bankruptcy protection in late April after a court accepted its reorganisation plan based on a \$450 million investment by Air Canada and U.S. investors.

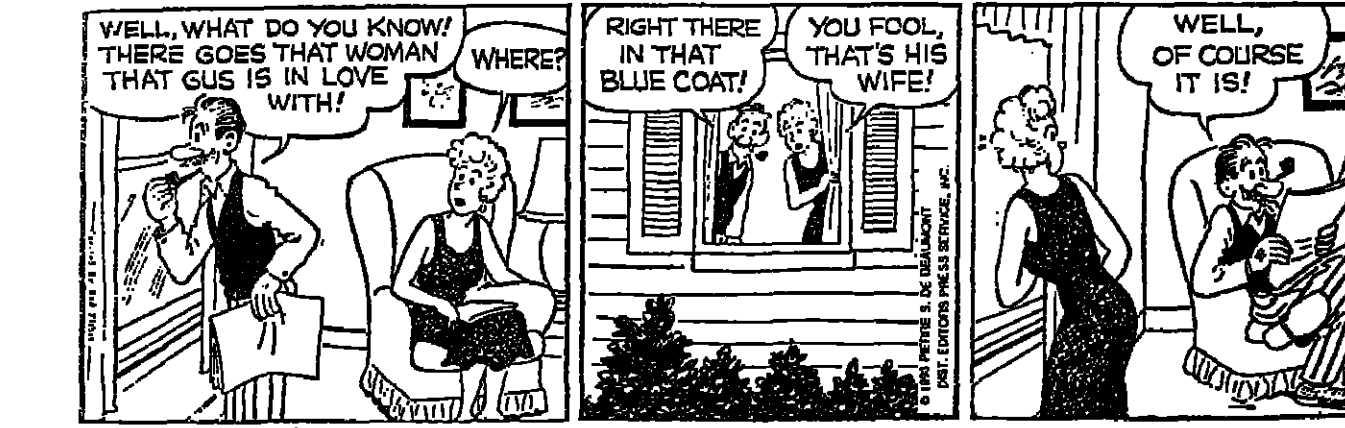
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Meet 'n' Jeff



THE BETTER HALF

By Harris

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

HEMRY
DUTIA
HUBLES
POMLEY

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here:

Saturday's Jumbles: REBEL THICK ARCTIC EXHORT

Answer: The oldest revolver in the gunsmith's study — THE EARTH

THE Daily Crossword

by Gerald R. Ferguson

ACROSS

1 Barber's powder
2 Tennis great
3 Drowsed
4 Medley
5 Secured debt
6 Biblical prophet
7 Cartel
8 weapons
9 Goose genus
10 Shores
11 Ms. Lansbury
12 Actress Sandra
13 USA word: abor
14 Decadent
15 Before water or bell
16 Summer lessons
17 Reading matter
18 Crony
19 Stew
20 Vicinity
21 Savor
22 Grandpa's memory bank?
23 Hostile
24 Lamb's mother
25 Coon
26 Whip
27 Cordons
28 Requested
29 Uncurious
30 De lace
31 Fortifications
32 Happy
33 Part of a kid's cowboy outfit
34 Sophia of films
35 Nun king
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37 High school student
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DOWN

1 Preschoolers
2 Herbal panacea
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6 Want bad
7 Man on deck
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14 Song of the Alps
15 Easy gait
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17 Escargot
18 Doonee or Luft
19 Dutch and microwave
20 Toy "gun"
21 Unlikely triumph
22 Earthen pot
23 Spooky
24 Cheeger
25 "Herrington"
26 Gone
27 Singor La Belle
28 Office fastener
29 Pappas
30 Colo. resort
31 Solidifies
32 Cockeyed
33 Shvago's beloved
34 Ruth
35 "mommy kissing..."
36 Blamrock or Premier
37 — condenser
38 Moved-smooth
39 Criminal

Bosnians negotiate ethnic division

GENEVA (R) — Bosnia's Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic sat down with his Serb and Croat enemies Wednesday to begin the tortuous process of negotiating his country's future ethnic division.

On the second day of peace talks that mediators hope to continue until a final settlement is reached, the beleaguered president met the leaders of Serb and Croat factions and their political masters from Serbia and Croatia proper.

Sources close to the Geneva talks said the discussions were to focus on maps showing the outlines of three ethnic mini-states, as jointly proposed by Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and Croat leader Mate Boban.

Although Mr. Izetbegovic still rejects any such "confederal solution" for Bosnia, the sources said hard bargaining had nevertheless begun on who gets what after 16 months of brutal conflict.

One source close to the negotiations said Serb leader Karadzic presented a map Tuesday under which the Muslims, who represented over 40 per cent of Bosnia's pre-war population, would receive about 27 per cent of its territory.

The Karadzic plan would effectively confine the Muslims to a rump Bosnian republic around the capital Sarajevo and to a pocket of territory in the northwest. Three Muslim enclaves in eastern Bosnia would come under Serb control.

Both Mr. Izetbegovic and international mediators Lord Owen

and Thorvald Stoltenberg were said to have objected to the plan, saying it sold the Muslims short.

The mediators were said to be insisting that Muslims receive at least 30 per cent of Bosnian territory, against the estimated 15 per cent they currently control.

Speaking to reporters before the talks, Serb leader Karadzic issued a blunt warning that there were two ways to end the war and the Muslims could only choose one of them.

"One way would be through talks, the other would be total defeat of one side — and it would be the Muslim side," he said.

"They are well-armed but they cannot fight against the Christian majority of Croats and Serbs. They should accept an agreement immediately because what they get around the table they cannot get through fighting," he added.

Diplomats said the more difficult bargaining might come between Muslims and Croats, former allies who have been recently locked in a fierce grab for territory in central Bosnia.

Although the Serbs appeared willing to give up some of the 70 per cent of Bosnia they have taken since they launched their rebellion against the Sarajevo administration in April 1992, Bosnian Croats were said to be refusing to cede more valuable land in the centre of the country.

The Croats were also under pressure to allow the Muslims enough territory to the southwest of Sarajevo to give them a realistic chance of setting up viable transport links to a free-port on

the Adriatic Sea.

The official timetable of the Geneva conference began with a meeting between Mr. Izetbegovic, Boban and Croatian President Franjo Tudjman. Mr. Izetbegovic was accompanied by other members of the collective Bosnian presidency.

Two hours later Mr. Izetbegovic held talks with Serb leader Mr. Karadzic and Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, generally seen as Mr. Karadzic's main backer.

Halfway into the second day of talks, diplomats and conference officials reported a general mood of optimism although Lord Owen told reporters he would be surprised if any deal were struck before the weekend.

Meanwhile the U.N. Wednesday played down a shelling attack in Sarajevo that exposed French U.N. troops to fire for the second time in two days.

U.N. officials also acknowledged that troops in Bosnia had so far been unable to implement fully the U.N.'s "safe areas" scheme for the republic's beleaguered Muslims in any one of the six havens, including the capital.

A detachment of 40 French soldiers who were setting up a base at Sarajevo's television centre Tuesday fled into the basement when shells began crashing down close to the complex.

But U.N. military spokesman Barry Frewer said the barrage, which followed a direct Serb attack on another French U.N. military base in the Bosnian

capital Sunday, had not been aimed at the troops.

He said it may have been a spillover from heavy fighting on nearby Zuc Hill, one of only two heights overlooking the Serb-besieged capital that is still in Muslim-led government hands.

"They did not consider it an attack on their position and therefore they did not return fire," Maj. Frewer told a news briefing.

Maj. Frewer said the shells at the TV building were believed to have come from Serb positions but he could not be certain.

France called on the United Nations and NATO Tuesday to activate plans to provide air cover for the 9,000 U.N. ground forces in Bosnia, who have come under repeated attack, usually from small arms, since they arrived in Bosnia late last year.

In Washington, President Bill Clinton reaffirmed Wednesday that the United States would consider using air power to defend United Nations troops in Bosnia if asked to do so.

"The position of the United States has long been that if the United Nations troops were attacked there we will do our part to protect them by making available air power," Mr. Clinton said in a picture-taking session with congressional Democrats.

"We have not yet been asked to do that," Mr. Clinton added. "If we are asked, that is something we will seriously consider."

"I'm going to be reviewing it in the next couple of days," Mr. Clinton added.

Rebel bombs cause blackout in Lima

LIMA (AFP) — Shining Path guerrillas bombed vital power lines late Tuesday, plunging most of the city in darkness, as other bombs went off outside five banks causing some damage but no victims, police said.

The attacks came hours after a van loaded with explosives blew up outside the U.S. embassy causing heavy damage and injuring two police officers. A suspected guerrilla was shot and killed while trying to escape, police said.

The wave of guerrilla bombings and attacks since Monday are apparently aimed at disrupting Wednesday's independence day celebrations and at proving President Alberto Fujimori's boast that the Shining Path is moribund wrong.

Mr. Fujimori, who after a military-backed power grab last year vowed to rid the country of guerrilla violence, marks his third year in office Wednesday.

State-run power company Electro Lima said electricity would be gradually restored to all areas, but had no assessment of the damage caused to its installations.

The five bombs that went off at the time of the blackout damaged the banks and nearby buildings, but caused no victims, police said.

Thousands of people were out celebrating the country's 172nd independence anniversary late Tuesday when the power went out and the explosions sent most of them back to the safety of their homes.



A Peruvian army soldier keeps reporters away from the site of an explosion at the U.S. embassy in Lima (AFP photo)

The U.S. embassy bomb caused heavy damage to the right side of the four-storey building, breaking windows and setting a number of small fires. An armoured car parked in front of the embassy was left a twisted mess of metal.

Peking censors ban Cannes winner

PEKING (AFP) — Hundreds of screaming fans mobbed director Chen Kaige at the Chinese premiere of Farewell To My Concubine Wednesday. Censors last week abruptly retracted permission for the film, joint winner of the Cannes Film Festival's top prize, to run in the Chinese capital. They reluctantly bowed to pressure from the Peking Exhibition Centre cinema for the film's premiere to go ahead before a select audience of journalists and wealthy Chinese. "This premiere will also be the last showing," Mr. Chen told journalists at the screening. He declined to elaborate, saying: "I don't want to be involved in politics." Hong Kong actor and singer Leslie Cheung, who stars in the film, said he and the crew were "very disappointed" at the decision. "I feel very sad," he said. "It's ridiculous. We are film workers." The film had already been cut and a new ending added in order to satisfy the censors, sources said. The film chronicles the relations between two Peking opera stars, tracing their careers from their youth in the 1920s through the Communist victory in 1949, the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s and up to the present day. It centres on a love triangle between the opera stars and a prostitute and alludes to the homosexuality of one of the singers, though there are no graphic scenes.

Move to legalise prostitution fails in S. Africa

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — A move for the legalisation of prostitution in South Africa was defeated in the Johannesburg municipal council here late Tuesday, press reports said Wednesday. A woman councillor, Ansen Dreyer, had argued that the city should petition parliament to legalise prostitution and bring prostitutes into the tax system, to generate revenue that could pay for clinics to help prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. But councillor Jack Bloom summed up the objections when he said: "I shudder to think of the state becoming the big pimp by regulating and taking its fair cut of earnings from this trade." He also warned against "Johannesburg becoming... the sex capital of Africa, attracting a vast influx of tourists with all their corrupting influences."

Richard The Lionheart casket goes on display

ROUEN, France (AFP) — The treasures of the Cathedral of Rouen, including the casket in which the heart of Richard the Lionheart was placed, have gone on display for the first time in the city's museum until Dec. 31. The treasures are not normally on public show but the St. Romain Tower, where they have been kept, is being renovated and the old canonical buildings have been turned into a permanent museum. As well as the casket that contained the heart of the Anglo-Norman sovereign, whose body was buried in the Abbey of Fontevault in the Loire, one of the highlights of the exhibition is the 13th century reliquary of St. Roman, bishop of Rouen in the 7th century.

17-million-year old elephant skull found in France

TOULOUSE, France (AFP) — The 17-million-year old skull of a prehistoric ancestor of the elephant was discovered on a paleontological site near Condom, in southwest France. Francis Duranthon, in charge of digs and conservation at the natural history of Toulouse, said the skull was "the oldest ever found in Europe of a 'Deinotherium', a member of the elephant family. In the same area, the remains of a deer of "an unknown species" had also been found, believed to date from the same era, he said. Both sets of remains would increase knowledge of these animals, which have long disappeared from earth. The skull of a Palaeomeryx, a mammal belonging to a family which has completely died out, halfway between a giraffe and a deer, was found on the same site in July last year.

Gaelic newspaper launched in Nova Scotia

MABOU, Canada (AFP) — A Gaelic newspaper has been launched in Nova Scotia as part of a bid to preserve the nearly forgotten Celtic tongue. "Am Breigh" is to be published quarterly by Frances and Ron MacEachern of Mabou, a village on the Cape Breton Island. "It seems fitting that a word with connotations for good times, hospitality and music be the title for a new Celtic publication," the couple said in the newspaper's first edition.

Congress committee cuts SDI programme

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — A congressional panel cut \$800 million from President Bill Clinton's request for \$3.8 billion for the ballistic missile defence programme once known as the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI).

The House of Representatives Armed Services Committee rejected a still deeper cut advocated by Chairman Ron Dellums, a Democrat from California, to approve the cut by a margin of 29 to 27.

The programme, dubbed Star Wars during former President Ronald Reagan's administration, is slated to be shifted to a ground-based defence rather than space-based weapons to intercept incoming ballistic missiles.

Also Tuesday, the Armed Services Committee rejected a bid to throw out the ban on homosexuals serving in the military, and approved a policy stating that homosexuality undermines readiness.

The panel planned to work through the night to finish work on the \$263 billion defence budget.

The Armed Services Committee approved \$111 million Tuesday to pay for U.S. military participation in international peacekeeping operations.

The money was included by a 33-22 vote in the annual U.S. defence authorisation bill for next year.

The bill would establish a new precedent for congressional funding of U.S. military costs of participating in international operations, in addition to paying to the United Nations the U.S. share for such operations.

Several Republicans on the committee objected that the separate funds for the U.S. military might enable a president to commit U.S. troops to some international operation on his own.

President Clinton requested the military money in addition to more than \$600 million for the U.S. contribution to U.N. peacekeeping operations next year.

Congressional committees have cut the \$600 million to about \$420 million but Congress has not taken final action yet.

The New York Times said Wednesday the United States is preparing an arms control plan that would ban the production of materials used to make nuclear weapons.

The administration of President Clinton is making plans to propose a worldwide ban on the production of highly enriched uranium and plutonium unless it is used for nuclear power and subject to international inspection, the newspaper said.

Under the proposal, which has not yet been finalised, all nations would be asked to sign international agreements to stop producing uranium and plutonium for weapons. The United States already has such a policy but Britain, China and Russia do not.

The newspaper said administration experts believe the plan, combined with a ban on nuclear testing, would restrain weapons development.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Worst seems over in South Asia floods

KATHMANDU (R) — The worst appears to be over in floods which have savaged Nepal, Bangladesh and north India killing more than 4,000 people, officials said Wednesday. Officials in all three countries reported water levels dropping in dozens of rivers which, after ferocious monsoon rains, stormed over their banks, swept away villages, made millions homeless and caused heavy crop damage. "The worst seems to be over now," said Nepali weatherman Purna Shrestha who reported the heaviest rainfall in the region for nearly two decades. "It didn't rain, it literally poured," he said. Officials in India and Bangladesh said river levels were dropping in clearer weather, allowing relief operations to be stepped up for millions of people who are short of food and threatened by cholera epidemic.

Kazakhs, Uzbeks call for CIS meeting

MOSCOW (R) — The leaders of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, complaining that unilateral decision-making was harming economic reforms in the Commonwealth of Independent States, called Wednesday for an urgent CIS summit. "On all sides, agreements achieved with great difficulty are being broken by unilateral decisions," the two presidents said in a statement published by ITAR-TASS News Agency and apparently prompted by Russia's drastic monetary reform this week.

Rivers collide as Kansas City braces

KANSAS CITY, Missouri (R) — Flood surges from the Missouri and Kansas Rivers collided at their confluence in Kansas City Tuesday, forcing massive evacuations and straining already weakened levees. Nervous officials braced for the worst as the churning waters pounded the embankment at the mouth of the Kansas River. "It's close, too close, but it looks like the dike is holding right now," said Kansas City Fire Chief Charles Fischer. Weekend rains across Nebraska, Kansas and eastern Iowa have fed the swollen rivers, with record crests forecast to converge on a triangular battery of levees and dikes that wall in the confluence and protect hundreds of homes and shops.

Ukraine, U.S. sign defence pact

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States and Ukraine Tuesday signed the first U.S. defence cooperation pact with a former Soviet republic, but it fell short of the security guarantees sought by Ukraine's parliament as a precondition to giving up its 1,600 nuclear warheads. The modest agreement for exchanges of military officials and the provision of U.S. defence expertise was signed by Ukrainian Defence Minister Konstantin Morozov and U.S. Defence Secretary Les Aspin at the Pentagon. They called it a base for expanding future military and other ties and for improving Ukraine's security from its neighbours. One of those neighbours in Russia, which has demanded that Kiev turn over the former Soviet nuclear arms to Russia for destruction.

Protestants fail to kill IRA ally

BEFLAST (R) — Protestant extremists narrowly failed in an attempt to kill a woman councillor from Sinn Fein, the political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA). The Ulster Freedom Fighters, an outlawed Protestant group fighting to keep Northern Ireland British, admitted responsibility for the attack on Annie Armstrong's West Belfast home and said it was "sheer luck" that it failed. A gunman fired through the window of the family house, hitting the television set and narrowly missing the Armstrong family of five. It was the second attack within 24 hours by the Ulster Freedom Fighters who also placed a car bomb outside the home of a moderate nationalist councillor with the Social Democratic and Labour Party. No one was hurt.

4th suspect identified in Rio massacre

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP) — A fourth policeman has been identified as a suspect in the massacre of seven street children who were shot to death in the city centre here, police said. Police said he was Lieutenant Anderson Marcelo Pinheiro de Albuquerque, like the three suspects in the case, a member of Rio de Janeiro's 40,000 strong militarised police force. Nilo Batista, the state secretary in charge of the Civil Police investigating the massacre, said late Monday the case had been solved and all remaining suspects would be detained in the coming hours. The children were killed early Friday outside the Candelaria Church, a Rio de Janeiro landmark in the city centre where about 50 minors were sleeping in the streets.

Firebomb destroys NAACP office

SACRAMENTO, California (AFP) — The office of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) was destroyed by a firebomb tossed through a window, the second such attack in a week, officials said. No one was injured in the pre-dawn attack Tuesday and no arrests have been made, officials said. It took four hours to put out the fire which destroyed records, office equipment and furniture. A pipe bomb exploded at the NAACP office in Tacoma, Washington Friday. "We see these acts as part of an emerging trend of attempts by the right-wing elements in our society to thwart the very positive re-awakening of activism within the civil rights movement," said Benjamin Chavis, NAACP's executive director.

Nigerian parties agree on government plan

LAGOS (R) — Nigeria's two parties have agreed on a plan for an interim government and hope the military will accept it to end the crisis arising from scrapped elections, a party spokesman said Wednesday.

Social Democratic Party (SDP) spokesman Amos Adakula told Reuters the plan had been agreed in talks with the National Republican Convention (NRC).

"The shaping of the interim option will come after the military government accepts it," Mr. Adakula said.

President Ibrahim Babangida, who has pledged to step down on Aug. 27, scrapped June 12 presidential elections, alleging malpractices, even though local and foreign observers said it was free and fair.

General Babangida considered the idea of an interim government two weeks ago but later dropped it, saying his civilian successor could be chosen only through a fresh ballot.

"There is not going to be an election. Even the NRC are not ready for election," Mr. Adakula said from the capital Abuja, where leaders of the two parties have been meeting since Tuesday.

Moshood Abiola, the SDP's candidate in the June polls, was well ahead in tallies before the military annulled the results. He has claimed since that he is the president-elect.

"If there cannot be election by Aug. 27, the government can either swear in Abiola or install an interim government," Mr. Adakula said. "...As far as we are concerned there is no other option."

No accord reached on Burma, human rights at ASEAN talks

SINGAPORE (AP) — Reflecting a wide split in how they view human rights and the rule of law, ASEAN and its Western trading partners agreed to disagree on how to deal with Burma's military junta at the close of their annual meeting Wednesday.

The United States, Australia, Canada and the European Community favour sanctions against Rangoon's military regime.

The six countries of the Association of South East Asian Nations insist on "constructive engagement" to eventually bring about change.

"Canada is appalled at the lack of human rights in Burma," said External Affairs Secretary Perrin Beatty.

Burma not only abuses human rights but forces refugees into neighbouring countries and is a major heroin supplier, U.S. Undersecretary of State Winston Lord told the closing news conference.

Mr. Lord replaced Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who broke off his trip Tuesday and returned to Washington to deal with the latest Middle East clash.

Belgian Foreign Minister Willy Claes said the European Community would continue political and economic sanctions.

Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans said that since Burma has expressed interest in join-

7-party summit to fix Japan coalition

TOKYO (R) — Seven Japanese opposition parties accelerated talks Wednesday on forming a coalition government and agreed to unveil a policy platform Thursday after a meeting of party leaders, officials said.

"In terms of basic policies, our seven parties are in agreement," said Socialist Secretary-General Hirotsuka Akamatsu.

"It will be the first change of government in 38 years so we are proceeding very cautiously," Mr. Akamatsu said after talks among senior officials of the seven parties.

The seven party leaders were to meet from 5 p.m. (0800 GMT) Thursday, he added.

Since the July 18 general election, when the long-ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) lost its majority, agreement by all the non-Communist opposition parties to hold a summit has been seen as the test of their determination to take power.

Another opposition official, Hajime Ishii of the Japan Renewal Party, said there had so far been no talk of a time minister. He said the parties might work all night to put the finishing touches on a common platform.

After 10 days of post-electoral manoeuvring as bold LDP and

opposition parties sought a majority, a decisive break came Wednesday when two fence-sitting parties — the Japan New Party and the Harbinger New Party — swung over to the opposition camp, apparently sealing the LDP's fate.

The seven are already committed to speedy enactment of far-reaching electoral and other reforms aimed at curbing the widespread corruption in Japanese public life.

In Wednesday's policy talks, the parties discussed a range of other policy decisions, starting with possible income tax cuts and a need to acknowledge the country's World War II "guilt."

Kazuo Aichi, another Japan Renewal Party official, said it and the other opposition groups had not agreed on details of a projected income tax cut.

They had yet to decide whether such a tax cut should be carried out as a pump-priming measure or as part of an overhaul of the entire lopsided tax system, he said.

Mr. Aichi said the party delegates did not discuss cutting defence spending, which some opposition parties had proposed as a way of financing the tax cut.

Back in the founding LDP, rival camps nominated candidates

to succeed lame duck Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa as party president.

Party lawmakers and representatives of regional chapters vote Friday for a new president, a job once hotly contested because it guaranteed the prime ministership.

Now, however, the LDP presidency looks to be a less desirable prize. At the last minute, ambitious former Finance Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto reversed a decision to stand.

In the end, Friday's ballot will pit Michio Watanabe, 70-year-old representative of the LDP old guard, against Yohei Kono, 56, who will carry the banner for party reformists.

Mr. Watanabe, boss of a large party faction, is a close ally of scandal-tainted former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone.

He was Mr. Miyazawa's foreign minister and deputy prime minister and in line to succeed him until forced to retire in April because of failing health.

Mr. Kono, who as chief cabinet secretary was Mr. Miyazawa's right-hand man in government, entered the ballot Wednesday after the reformist camp failed to persuade ailing 78-year-old Justice Minister Masaharu Gotoda to run.

Russians, Tajiks reportedly driven off rebels

DUSHANBE (AFP) — Russian and Tajik forces have successfully completed a three-day sweep through a border region with Afghanistan, killing a large number of Tajik rebels and Afghan mercenaries, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said here Wednesday.

The operation was mounted by tanks and helicopter gunships of the Russian 201st Division, Russian Border Guards and Tajik troops.

The spokesman said they won back the mountainous region of Varti, where several hundred armed Islamic fundamentalists and Mujahideen from Afghanistan set up camp early this month. Backed by mortars on the

Afghan side of the Pindzh River, they raided border posts and two weeks ago killed at least 100 civilians and 25 Border Guards in one incident.

Russia has since then poured in reinforcements, and a Russian officer said there would soon be more than 22,000 troops stationed in Tajikistan.

The fighting stems from a power struggle between pro-democracy groups and the pro-Communist faction which drove an Islamic-led government out of Dushanbe last November. Thousands of Islamic Tajiks fled to northern Afghanistan and began guerrilla operations.

Under a mutual assistance agreement between Moscow and Dushanbe signed in May, Russian troops are to help defend Tajikistan until 1999.

Meanwhile an Afghan presidential spokesman said Wednesday Tajikistan should start talks with Tajik Islamic rebels as a step toward ending the border crisis between that country and Afghanistan.

"It is advisable for the Tajik government to start negotiations with the opponent parties now, and not wait many years like (Afghanistan's deposed Communist President) Najibullah did," spokesman Abdul Aziz Morad said.

wound up three days of talks with their counterparts from the European Community, Japan, South Korea, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States Wednesday.

Vietnam, Laos and Papua New Guinea were present as observers. Centerpiece of the meeting was endorsement of a new ASEAN Security Forum including the six ASEAN members and three observers, their seven big trading partners, plus China and Russia. "We do not have a master plan or a rigid road map," Mr. Wong said in acknowledging that the forum so far consists only of a name.

ASEAN officials said the forum would offer "preventive diplomacy" to deal with a full range of security matters, from arms transfers and military exercises to the movement of refugees and illegal workers across international borders.

They likened it to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The CSCE is a forum for 38 nations to discuss European Security following the collapse of communism and the end of the cold war.

Current security problems in Asia include instability in Cambodia, North Korea's nuclear ambitions and overlapping claims to the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea.

Indonesia tries to promote and protect human rights, said Foreign Minister Ali Alatas, but the East Timor issue has been clouded by disinformation and misperceptions. He did not elaborate.

China's bloody suppression of pro-democracy demonstrations in June 1989 and the Indonesian army's massacre of unarmed civilians in East Timor in November 1991 made both Peking and Jakarta resentful about charges of human rights shortcomings.

ASEAN refused to join the boycott, adhering to the principle of non-interference in domestic affairs of individual countries.

ASEAN foreign ministers

China's future sportsmen train for 2000 Olympics

PEKING (AFP) — Song Tong is an eight-year-old with a mission. He has little doubt he will become the best gymnast in China and win a gold medal at the 2000 Olympics — preferably held in Peking.

Song was plucked from his kindergarten aged four to be transformed into one of China's future champions at the Peking Amateur Sports School, the best of the country's 154 controversial sports "factories."

He and some 300 fellow students have a sense of purpose beyond their years, instilled during obsessive year-round training and virtual confinement to the compound.

The students — in 11 sports ranging from martial arts to tennis, ping pong to weightlifting — get up each day at 6:30 a.m. and spend the morning in the classroom like any other Chinese schoolchildren.

After lunch and a siesta, the students train. In the evening, they do their homework before lights go out at 9:00 p.m.

On Sundays the children — all from Peking — may visit their parents, but are not allowed home any other time during eight or more years in the school.

Twice-yearly school holidays for China's budding sports champions mean a reprieve from learning maths, language and science — but classes are replaced by all-day training.

"It seems tough not to let them go home during the holidays, but for sportsmen if you don't train constantly, then you get out of practice and get fat — so they must stay here all year," says administrators Wang Yan.

He acknowledges training is "really pretty tough," in line with secret methods learned from the former Soviet Union, but believes this is vital for China — which won 16 golds at the Barcelona Olympics — to maintain its



Han Guilan instructs a pupil at the Peking Amateur Sports School as his classmates look on (AFP photo)

international sporting success.

"It's not like some European countries where athletes tend to take it rather too easy," he says.

China's sports schools, like those of the former Soviet Union, have been criticised abroad for wrecking young children emotionally through confinement, excessive pressure to succeed and rejection in their early teens for the 80 per cent that do not make the city, national then Olympic teams.

Song says he does not mind working so hard "because I want to be the Chinese champion, the best in all of China."

"I can do it, I'm very good," confides the assured gymnast, before cracking into giggles.

Lu Zongbia, a shy seven-year-old, is less ready than Song to

boast her own ability, but her steady gaze suggests an equal determination.

"I want to be number one," she says, standing to attention as she talks. "But I want all my friends to be number one too."

The remark sums up the atmosphere in the school's gymnasium, where children so small they could virtually walk under the horse instead vault over it.

Competition is intense and coaches are strict, but between exercises the students laugh and play together like any seven-year-olds. "They're all my good friends too," says Song.

The children are all rooting for the success of Peking's bid to host the Olympics in 2000 and being pushed extra hard to prepare for the the games.

"The pupils here now are the ones who would take part in the 2000 Olympics, so we are putting extra effort into training them," says Mr. Wang. "And it's a real boost for them — it encourages them to work even harder."

The prospect of becoming one of the chosen few to make the Olympic team is understandably appealing to athletes and their families.

With it comes good housing and, in the case of the Barcelona Games, cash rewards reported at up to one million yuan (\$174,000) for bringing in a gold medal.

Song dreams of reaching the heights of Li Ning, China's star male gymnast whose three golds at Barcelona brought him lucrative advertising contracts and his own sports brand.

Jackson sets European high hurdles record at Sestriere

SESTRIERE, Italy (R) — Briton Colin Jackson demolished his own European 110 metres hurdles record when he posted a time of 12.97 seconds in an international athletics meeting at this high-altitude ski resort Wednesday.

The 26-year-old Welshman destroyed a high-class field including Canadian Olympic champion Mark McKoy to better the previous record of 13.04 seconds he set in Cologne last August.

"I'm obviously very pleased with the performance and more than satisfied with the time," said Jackson.

His time, just 0.05 seconds outside the four-year-old world record of American Roger Kingdom, came despite running into a wind of 1.6 metres per second in hot, sunny conditions.

The performance will boost the European champion's confidence ahead of the World Championships in Stuttgart next month. The Briton finished a disappointing seventh in the Olympic final last year.

American 400 metres Olympic champion Quincy Watts enjoyed his outing 2,000 metres above sea level in this small, uncovered stadium.

Watts clocked 44.13 seconds, the third best time of the year. His two chief rivals, fellow Americans Michael Johnson and Butch Reynolds, are the only men to have gone faster in 1993.

Kevin Young 400 metres hurdles Olympic champion, duly returned to form after seeing his 26-race unbeaten streak ended in London last week.

Young faced little opposition

but had to settle for the unexceptional time of 48.20 seconds.

Namibian Frankie Fredericks, silver medallist in the two Olympic sprint events last year, notched up a double success to underline his World Championship credentials.

Fredericks defied a strong head wind to post a time of 10.16 in the 100 metres, beating former world record holder Leroy Burrell into second place.

The American-based African then doubled up with victory in 20.08 in the 200, the fourth best time this season.

German Susen Tiedtke handed her compatriot Heike Drechsler a rare long jump defeat.

The blond-haired German took advantage of the strong breeze at her back to leap a personal best of 7.19 metres on her last jump.

Olympic champion Drechsler could manage only 7.12 metres in reply.

Tiedtke's leap was the best of the year but the wind speed of 3.70 metres per second was well above the permitted limit.

Drechsler recorded the longest jump by a woman in history with 7.65 metres here last year.

But she was denied a place in the record books by a wind reading of just one centimetre above the maximum limit of two metres a second.

Organisers have made a Ferrari 348 sports car the prize for anyone who breaks a world record in Sestriere.

The red sports car parked in the middle of the athletics field, was long on admirers but short on takers.

Sotomayor breaks world high jump record

SALAMANCA, Spain (R) — Javier Sotomayor, who extended his own world high jump record to 2.45 metres on Tuesday, is confident that none of his current rivals will break the new mark.

"The new record could last a few years yet," the 25-year-old Cuban Olympic champion said.

"Unless there is some unknown youngster making great advances somewhere, I don't think there's anyone who can break my record at the moment," Sotomayor added a centimetre

to his old record with his second attempt at 2.45 metres in this ancient university town.

He beat Patrik Sjoeborg's world record here in 1983 with a leap of 2.43 and, on July 29, 1989, Sotomayor became the first athlete to clear eight feet when he lifted his record to 2.44 in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

"Since the beginning of the year I've been feeling good," Sotomayor said. "I won the World Indoor Championships in Toronto with 2.41 and have been

averaging 2.35 on the European circuit.

"Given the good memories I have of this city it was clear the record could fall here."

"I wanted to break the record here because it's a small city and I feel like I'm in Cuba. People recognise me in the street and ask how I am, putting me in the right mental frame."

He dedicated the record to "my son, my people, my government, which has been such a

great help to me, and to the people of Salamanca."

Sotomayor said his new goal was to win the world title in the Stuttgart World Championships next month.

"I've now got a new world record. If I win there it will be a brilliant year," he said. "Maybe it's possible to win a couple of centimetres higher — 2.46 or 2.48 perhaps, but I don't believe it's possible to jump 2.50. At least I'm nothing that I'm planning on."

NBC gets Atlanta Olympic Games for \$456 million

NEW YORK (AFP) — The NBC network won the U.S. television rights to the 1996 Olympic Games for an unprecedented \$456 million the International Olympic Committee (IOC) confirmed Tuesday.

The IOC awarded NBC its third straight Summer Olympic Games after a day of talks with all three major networks.

The \$456 million is \$55 million more than the \$401 million NBC paid for the rights to the 1992 games in Barcelona, a project that left the company at least \$100 million in the hole.

This time, NBC Sports President Dick Ebersol said, "We anticipate making money."

NBC beat out ABC and CBS, though industry analysts said CBS did not appear to be very interested.

CBS already has the rights to the 1994 Winter Games in Lillehammer, Norway, and broadcast the 1992 Winter Olympic Games

from Albertville, France.

ABC, however, was trying to get back into the Summer Olympic Games for the first time since 1984.

"Obviously we were very interested and thought we had a competitive bid," said ABC Sports spokesman Mark Mandell.

"We're sorry it didn't work out."

The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) gets 60 per cent of the U.S. rights fee and the IOC get 40 per cent.

The European rights had already been sold for \$250 million to the European Broadcasting Union (EBU).

That was a huge increase on the \$90 million paid by the EBU for the rights to Barcelona.

ACOG Chairman Billy Payne initially set his sights on \$600 million from U.S. television.

But a decline in ratings for the last two games had industry analysts predicting something in

the range of \$375 million \$400 million.

"As we reviewed the bids submitted to us, it became clear to us that the market is a little bit more complex than it was in the past," said IOC vice president and television negotiator Dick Pound.

"In the final analysis, it became clear to us that the superior bid was submitted by NBC."

NBC's original bid was \$456 million. ABC bid \$440 million and CBS \$405 million.

In the afternoon session of talks, both ABC and CBS raised their bids by \$10 million as NBC held firm.

Atlanta's location in the eastern time zone is one factor in NBC's confidence in the games as a money-making proposition.

That gives NBC the opportunity to schedule live, prime-time coverage of key events, which was impossible from Seoul and Barcelona.

Specific programming details are still to be determined, but initial plans call for 168 hours of coverage, compared to 161 hours from Barcelona.

The opening ceremonies are to be moved from Saturday afternoon to Friday night in U.S. prime time.

NBC will "also promote the games well before they begin, airing a half-hour programme about the Olympics as part of its pre-Super Bowl coverage on Jan. 30, 1994."

It was not yet clear if NBC would accept a cable partner. Atlanta-based Turner Broadcasting, parent of Cable News Network, offered \$75 million to be a partner in Barcelona, but NBC refused.

"They said, 'We have not made a deal. We are prepared to make a deal under the right circumstances,'" Mr. Pound said. "We (the IOC) clearly hope there will be one."

Olympic champion McKoy set to miss World Championships

SESTRIERE, Italy (R) — Olympic high hurdles champion Mark McKoy is likely to miss the World Championships after confirming Wednesday that he would not attend the Canadian trials this weekend.

"It looks like I'll be sitting there out," McKoy said of the World Championships, to be held in Stuttgart next month.

"I have a letter at home telling me that if I don't go to the trials then I won't be on the Canadian team," added the 110 metres hurdler, now based in Austria.

"But I'm not going. Even if I catch a plane tomorrow then I won't get to Canada until just 24 hours before they want me to run."

"I've achieved what I wanted

to in the sport and if they don't want me to compete in the World Championships that's their loss."

McKoy, who was born in Guyana and spent part of his childhood in England, criticised the Canadian authorities for the timing of the trials.

"They've scheduled the trials too late. If I have to fly there and back to Europe again I will need at least a week to recover and won't be at my best for Stuttgart."

The World Championships start on Aug. 14, just two weeks after the trials.

"If I'm not going to be properly prepared then there is no point going to Stuttgart," added McKoy, who seemed amused rather than angered by the row.

McKoy said he hoped to compete in a meeting in Cologne Sunday but feared he would be banned.

"I think there is a rule stopping you from running on the same day as your national trials. We'll have to get a ruling on that."

"Then I hope to run in Zurich on Aug. 4 and after that I just don't know."

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSH
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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠A987 ♣AKQ ♠AKQJ
What is your opening bid?

Q.2—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠Q104 ♣K973 ♠963 ♠AK
Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one spade. What action do you take?

Q.3—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠4 ♠8632 ♠85 ♠AKQ1094
Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one diamond. What action do you take?

Q.4—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠A6 ♠A1083 ♠AQJ ♠KJ3

The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 3 ♠ Pass
What do you bid now?

Q.5—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠73 ♠874 ♠AKQJ ♠AKQ10
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
What do you bid now?

Q.6—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠874 ♠73 ♠AKQJ ♠AKQ10
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
What do you bid now?

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<p align="center">CINEMA</p> <p align="center">CONCORD</p> <p align="center">Tel.: 677420</p> <p align="center">THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS</p> <p align="center">Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.</p>	<p align="center">CINEMA</p> <p align="center">PLAZA</p> <p align="center">Tel.: 699238</p> <p align="center">Adel Imam in Wad Sayyed Al Shaghal play (Arabic)</p> <p align="center">Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:30</p>	<p align="center">CINEMA</p> <p align="center">PHILADELPHIA</p> <p align="center">Tel.: 634144</p> <p align="center">Al Pacino — in SCENT OF A WOMAN</p> <p align="center">Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 6:15, 9 p.m.</p>	<p align="center">Nabil Al Mashini Theatre</p> <p align="center">Tel.: 675371</p> <p align="center">For the first time in Amman you have a date with the National Palestinian Theatre — the Gaza Strip — in a play entitled: The Assassination of Nanthaleh by artist Saeed Bifar</p> <p align="center">Shows on Friday and Saturday, June 4 and 5 at 8:30 p.m. Please book seats in advance</p>
<p align="center">Nabil & Hisham's Theatre</p> <p align="center">Tel.: 625155</p> <p align="center">AHLAN THEATRE</p> <p align="center">The theatre will be closed in preparation for "Ahlam Arab Summer" by which will be shown at the Jordanian Festival for Culture and Arts.</p>		<p align="center">Nabil & Hisham's Theatre</p> <p align="center">Tel.: 625155</p> <p align="center">AHLAN THEATRE</p> <p align="center">The theatre will be closed in preparation for "Ahlam Arab Summer" by which will be shown at the Jordanian Festival for Culture and Arts.</p>	

Blasts rock Milan, Rome; officials see 'political' terror

ROME (AP) — People cried out in panic as bombs ripped through Rome's ancient centre, just minutes after an explosion killed five people in Milan. Dozens were injured in the attacks.

There was no immediate indication who may have carried out Tuesday night's attacks. Officials said they were an attempt to sow panic at a time when Italians, disgusted by a corruption scandal that has dragged in much of the country's political and business elite, are hoping for radical political change. Two bombings struck terror in May, including one that damaged the Uffizi art museum in Florence.

Some officials suggested the bombings may be an attempt to derail the corruption probe, but prosecutors said they had no intention of slowing up.

The two explosions in Rome, just before midnight, heavily damaged two churches, one from the 6th century and the other the Pope's seat as bishop of Rome. Twenty-four people were hospitalised.

Premier Carlo Ciampi blamed "political terrorists," although he acknowledged his government did not know who was behind the attacks.

Pope John Paul II said he was praying for Italians "at this time of great trial." Immediately after his general audience at the Vatican, he viewed the damage at his basilica and the second church damaged by the blasts.

The head of Italy's civilian intelligence service resigned within hours of the bomb attacks.

Announcing the resignation of Angelo Finocchiaro, Interior Minister Nicola Mancino told parliament he had immediately named Domenico Salazar as Mr. Finocchiaro's successor at the head of the SISDE intelligence agency.

In Milan, more than 15,000 people marched in protest of the attacks, gathering in Piazza Fontana, the site of a 1969 bombing that killed 17 people. It has never been solved.

The Milan explosion went off about 11:15 p.m. (0900 GMT) on the Piazza Cavour, about a kilometre (half-mile) from La Scala opera house in front of a modern art gallery. An adjacent art pavilion was destroyed along with 20 art works by Mario Nigro.

Three firefighters, a policeman and a man sleeping in a nearby park were killed. At least seven other people were hurt, none seriously. Windows at the gallery were broken but no damage to art works was reported.

The ANSA news agency reported early Wednesday that a caller claimed responsibility for the Milan blast on behalf of the November 17 Armed Falcange group. But authorities have given little credence to claims by callers using that name in previous bombings.

News reports said authorities found a Fiat Compact near the main train station believed to have been the get-away car for the St. John Lateran bombing. Three witnesses gave police a description of the car and a suspect as well as its license plate number, the news agency AGI said.

Mr. Ciampi indicated earlier that the government would not impose strict measures in response to the bombings.

"In the face of repeated attempts to create disorder and panic to halt the country in its move to renewal, the government reaffirms its determination to guarantee the right of Italians to democratic progress and liberty," he said.

Other officials blamed the blasts on mafia attempts to scare

Italians away from political reform. "It's a political-mafioso warning. I don't see how to read it otherwise," said Milan Mayor Marco Formentini.

In Rome, the first explosion occurred around midnight, damaging the facade of St. John Lateran Basilica. Pope John Paul II's church as titular bishop of Rome. Twenty-four people were hospitalised.

The nearby residence of the vicar of Rome, who carries out the duties of bishop in the Pope's place, was damaged inside.

Minutes later an explosion went off on Via del Velabro, near the ancient Roman forum and the Michelangelo-designed Campidoglio Square, the seat of city government.

It destroyed the famed portico of the 6th century Church of San Giorgio in Velabro. All that was left was a single arch and length of stone beam.

Ancient columns lay amid the rubble of the portico and a huge hole was torn in the side of the church.

"Almost everyone threw themselves on the floor. The lights went out. There were people screaming, there were people calling for their cats and there were people calling for the Madonna," said Giancarlo Ercolani, who was in his nearby apartment when the blast hit.

The powerful blasts shook windows at least six kilometres away. Sirens wailed across the city and shaken tourists mixed with police and local onlookers.

Milan is the centre of Italy's anti-corruption probe, which has implicated more than 2,500 business and political figures over the past 1 1/2 years.

The city's chief prosecutor, Francesco Saverio Borrelli, called the Milan blast a "symbolic act" to intimidate the investigators.

Regent: Israel wants advantages of peace and Mideast acceptance without paying for it

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, said Wednesday Israel was seeking to acquire the advantages of peace without paying for it and trying to become an acceptable member of the club of the Middle East while continuing to expand at the expense of the neighbouring Arab countries.

"The occupied Arab territories continue to witness geographic and social disintegration since 1948 due to the Israeli occupation," the Regent said at a meeting at the Royal Court with U.N. General Assembly President Stoyan Ganey.

The Regent reviewed with Mr. Ganey the role of the U.N. in light of world developments and discussed the obstacles posed by Israel in the peace process. He focused particularly on the ongoing Israeli assault on South Lebanon. Such practices, he said, "would never help achieve climate conducive to the peace process."

"The new world order, the Regent said, "can never achieve prosperity and prog-



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Wednesday meets with U.N. General Assembly President Stoyan Ganey (Petra photo).

ress for the world unless it becomes humanitarian in nature and acts independently from the polarisation process and away from all forms of hegemony."

Referring to Jordan's losses in the Gulf crisis, the Regent said the United Nations should

address the situation and compensate for the damage and losses Jordan sustained.

Mr. Ganey outlined to the Regent the efforts of the U.N. to re-organise itself so as to be able to better shoulder its responsibilities and contribute to world development.

He also praised Jordan's positive role and its continued support of and cooperation with the United Nations.

Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad Al Anani and Jordan's U.N. Representative Adnan Abu Odeh were present at the meeting.

Iraq says no final deal yet on arms monitoring

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq said Wednesday it has not yet reached final agreement with the United Nations on long-term arms monitoring and expected further concessions.

Many parties think Iraq "has agreed to comply with future monitoring," the government newspaper Al Jumhuriyah said in a front-page editorial.

"This saying is inaccurate and wrong," the paper said, making clear that Baghdad is not ready to unconditionally accept U.N. monitoring of its weapons banned under terms of the Gulf war ceasefire.

"Iraq has expressed preparedness to comply with a general perspective," it added.

Iraq said last week it was ready to comply with Security Council Resolution 715 on long-term weapons monitoring but expected concessions in return.

The deal was struck to end a confrontation which threatened to escalate to military action over Iraq's refusal to let the U.N. install monitoring cameras at two missile-testing sites near Baghdad.

U.N. inspectors this week installed three of the cameras, but they will not be switched on until further talks have taken place.

"Among the most outstanding facts that have to be stated now is that there exists a clear difference between agreeing to future monitoring and expressing readiness to honour Resolution 715," the Iraqi paper said.

It said a position paper Iraq handed to senior U.N. official Rolf Ekeus during his Baghdad visit which defused the crisis over camera monitoring should be viewed as part of a "package deal" committing both the Security Council and Baghdad to honour mutual obligations.

our mutual obligations.

"The central concept in Iraq's readiness to comply with 715 is that honouring of obligations is not only the responsibility of one party, Iraq," Al Jumhuriyah said.

A senior U.N. nuclear expert, Maurizio Zifferero, said on Tuesday the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was drawing up plans for future surveillance of Iraq's nuclear potential.

He said such plans could not be implemented before Iraq and the U.N. agreed on how future monitoring should be conducted.

He said Iraq had pledged to open secret files on its arms supply network but has not said when.

Mr. Zifferero said he had received assurances the files would be open from Humam Abdul Khalik Abdul Ghafuras,

minister of higher education and scientific research.

But Mr. Zifferero, who heads a team of U.N. inspectors which arrived in Baghdad Friday primarily to prepare for removal of Iraq's remaining stocks of irradiated-uranium fuel, said the minister had not set a specific time for opening the files.

Another team of U.N. inspectors said more work needed to be done to install surveillance cameras at two Iraqi missile test sites and declined to spell out the reason for the apparent delay.

American team leader Bill Eckert said earlier in the week that the three remaining cameras would be installed Wednesday, but after spending 10 hours at one site, he would not say if the installation had taken place.

"This is one thing I do not want to get into," Mr. Eckert said. "There is still more work to do."

Israeli strikes displace 500,000 in Lebanon

(Continued from page 1)

Israel is deliberately forcing the massive Lebanese exodus northwards out of the combat area in a bid to pressure Lebanon and Syria, which was 35,000 troops in Lebanon, into halting Hizbollah attacks.

Mr. Rabin accused Syria of at best "closing its eyes" and even covering Hizbollah.

About 5,000 Hizbollah partisans staged a demonstration in support of the guerrillas in defiance of a government ban, shouting "Death to America, death to Israel."

Brandishing flags of the Islamic Resistance, Hizbollah's armed wing, and portraits of Iranian religious leaders, the demonstrators, led by five of the eight Hizbollah members of parliament, marched for more than one hour.

Around 50 police watched the demonstration but did not intervene as Hizbollah security forces, with pistols hung on their belts, led the march.

The government Tuesday issued an order banning all marches here ahead of the Hizbollah demonstration, but officials said authorities later gave their tacit approval for the protest.

Young men and women tore up and burned pictures of Mr. Rabin, U.S. President Bill Clinton and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, as well as American and Israeli flags.

U.N. officials said hundreds of houses in towns and villages were destroyed by artillery fire along a 50-kilometre arc stretching from the Mediterranean coast to the foothills of Mount Hermon. Some had crumbled on the inhabitants.

The survivors first fled east into the Bekka Valley and west to the port cities of Tyre and Sidon.

But they had to move again Wednesday as Israeli jets, helicopter gunships and missile boats pounded those towns and the cluster of Palestinian refugee camps surrounding them.

Officials of the government and the U.N. peacekeeping troops estimated the fighting had forced 500,000 people to flee southern Lebanon, out of a population of 800,000.

Four Israeli missile boats opened fire Wednesday morning on Sidon, Lebanon's third largest city, where the population of 300,000 had been swollen by refugees from the border area.

Panicked families crowded into cars, trucks and buses and turned Lebanon's coastal highway into a four-lane traffic jam headed towards Beirut.

The Israeli boats fired missiles Wednesday evening which struck Sidon's gas plant, which provides all of southern Lebanon's bottled gas. Firefighters contained the huge blaze that broke out, scattering people from nearby neighbourhoods.

"I can't take it any more," said Mansour Mandour as he prepared to leave Sidon. The 50-year-old man had already fled the village of Jibsheet to the east and said his town of 5,000 was now nearly abandoned.

Residents and refugees also fled Tyre after the Voice of the South, operated by the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia, warned they would be "subjected to Israeli fire." Israeli jets and helicopters fired at the Rashidiyah refugee camp on Tyre's northeastern edge and Howitzers opened up on nearby villages.

One wire-guided missile hit a three-storey building in the village of Qleish where about 20 tenants were sheltering in the basement. U.N. officials said two people died and 18 were pulled from the rubble, all with serious injuries.

Israeli fighters buzzed Beirut international airport at midday. Sonic booms shattered windows in the terminal building and control tower, and waiting passengers dived for cover. Flights were not interrupted, airport officials said.

Suspected Katyusha launching forums in pine woods overlooking the inland market town of Nabatiyah were hammered by fighter-bombers and Cobra gunships. The town itself was cloaked again from the air, although its 35,000 inhabitants

had almost entirely abandoned their shell-pocked, smouldering homes.

"It's worse than a killer earthquake," said Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, whose Amal militia counted Nabatiyah as a stronghold.

Amal had claimed responsibility Monday for killing the eighth Israeli soldier this month in the "security zone."

The other Israeli troop killings, and seven injuries, since July 8 were claimed by Hizbollah, and the Popular Front For The Liberation of Palestine-General Command.

The Lebanese authorities have authorised Hizbollah to requisition dozens of schools to help the refugees streaming towards Beirut.

In Beirut's already overcrowded slums, scores of families have been temporarily housed in state-run schools, closed for summer recess.

On Wednesday, young Hizbollah partisans collected funds on the streets for homeless while other members of the movement distributed mattresses, food, clothing and money to the refugees.

Arab League calls urgent meeting

(Continued from page 1)

With Syrian Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam to discuss the violence in Lebanon and the peace process.

Mr. Posuvalyuk, head of the foreign ministry's department for Africa and the Middle East, arrived Monday on the first leg of a Middle East tour to try to narrow differences that have stalled the Arab-Israeli peace process.

The Syrian Arab News Agency said Mr. Khaddam discussed the "Israeli aggression against Lebanon and its impact on the peace process." No other details were given.

Mr. Posuvalyuk's tour will also take him to Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia.

In Kuala Lumpur, Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat expressed deep concern day over the Israeli offensive.

"Mr. Arafat is of course very concerned over the attacks. Our people and our children are dying there," PLO Ambassador to Malaysia Ahmad Al Fatah said after greeting Mr. Arafat who was beginning a three-day visit to Malaysia.

Planning Minister Ziad Fariz announced at the meeting that Jordan was about to prepare a report on human development in the Kingdom. A team of experts will be entrusted with preparing the report which will be of great importance to development plans

in Jordan, Dr. Fariz said. Dr. Fariz urged industrial nations to revise the structure of their assistance to and relations with developing countries and stressed the need to link between human and economic resources and "development on the one hand and expansions in tackling unemployment on the other."

The meeting, which was held to declare issuing the report, is the first to be held in an Arab capital. It is the first time that the report is published in Arabic.

King voices deep concern over Israeli attacks

(Continued from page 1)

London. Following are Al Hayat questions and the King's answers in the interview:

QUESTION: In your view how could the events in Lebanon, affect the peace process?

ANSWER: I am following with deep concern the regrettable events and the violence going on in Lebanon, hoping for a quick end to the fighting so it would not negatively affect the peace process and the arrival at a just solution acceptable to the coming generations.

Q: Do you believe that the Israeli military operations would affect the peace process?

A: The continuation of the violence could have a negative effect. I hope greatly that these events can be contained quickly and will stop.

Q: Jordan is known to be ready for peace. Do you believe that the Palestinians are ready too?

A: Jordan is working hand in hand with the Palestinians as it feels it is the closest Arab country to Palestine. We watch and await progress to be achieved along the Palestinian-Israeli track and we continue to work with the Palestinians to coordinate and facilitate the chances for arriving at the aspired goal, which is the restoration of the Palestinian rights in the Palestinian homeland in the framework of a solution acceptable to the coming generations, a solution that would guarantee peace for all.

Q: Can you give us a clear idea about the current talk about the confederation?

A: This subject has been put forth more than once. At present Jordanian-Palestinian efforts are underway, tackling all fields and aiming at arriving at a clear formula to ensure the rights of the Palestinians in their homeland. Now, if the future relationship between the two sides is considered as one that can facilitate the achievement at this objective, then I believe the door is also open to discuss this matter.

Q: Do you believe that discussion of a confederation would facilitate the peace process and did you personally propose it?

A: This matter was not proposed only by us but rather by the two parties simultaneously. It did not aim at discussing the confederation as a mere form of future relationship but rather as an exemplary relationship that can guarantee the rights of the Palestinians on their national soil and also achieve integration and cooperation that can benefit the two sides not only at this stage but at future stages as well.

Q: How do you view the possibility of achieving this relationship in form and substance?

A: We put forth the idea of confederation a long time ago. But, in my view, people on both sides should be offered the idea of two parliaments, two governments, a central council and a central government and two flags, and perhaps an entity that would serve as a nucleus for a federation among Arab states.

Q: In your view, what is the danger that is now posed to Jordan — the collapse of the peace process or the collapse of Iraq's unity?

A: A collapse of the peace process would be extremely dangerous. The question we always ask ourselves and others what is the alternative to the peace process. There is no alternative. Peace in this sense does not mean surrender, but peace based on reason and logic and the rights of the Palestinians on Palestinian national soil and give all reassurance in this important and sensitive part of the world.

Now we are facing new problems. I have tried to deal with the question of fundamentalism as the world is now looking for a new enemy. There are certain practices and actions resulting from despair and anger which are not related to our Islam and our faith. These actions are being attributed to Muslims who are being regarded as the enemies of the world, especially in the wake of the tragic events that took place in the past few years.

If we cannot reach a just and honourable peace acceptable to the future generations with regard to the Palestine question and the Arab-Israeli problem, the future would be bleak for all, not for this region alone.

On the other hand the collapse of Iraq, meaning it would break up, would also be extremely dangerous because it would mean — God forbid — that we would continue on the path of disintegration.

Q: Do you fear for the safety and unity of Iraq?

A: Yes, I have genuine fears for Iraq's safety.

Q: In your view what are the best means for dealing with this subject?

A: This subject must be tackled by Iraq itself and its own people. We want to see a united Iraq returning to the world intact. If matters continue in this vein, there are real fears of potential danger facing not only Iraq but also the Arab World at large.

Q: Who should take the initiative in this regard?

A: In my view the Iraqi people and their unity are more impor-

tant. We sympathise with the Iraqi who are facing sufferings and hard circumstances. We hope that the Iraqi people will soon take steps to regain their national unity through national reconciliation that would take the Iraqis into a stage in which they would enjoy democracy and political pluralism, a stage when human rights would be respected and safeguarded.

Q: How did the Iraqis react to this idea so far?

A: I have not heard an answer yet, but I hope God would guide the Iraqis to the right path.

Q: Your words imply bitterness because Iraq did not respond to the requirements of the recent events. Do you really feel bitter in view of the Iraqi leadership's behaviour?

A: I can say that I have a clear conscience because I left no door or way unexplored or spared any efforts. We lived through very dangerous moments and faced serious situations forcing us to do all that in our power to deal with the circumstances within the Arab family, but we failed to achieve that. We had sought to avert a disaster and a bloodbath which caused instability to the whole region and sufferings to the Arab Nation. We failed in this endeavour, but I personally had done all that was possible because I felt it was my duty in this regard. The coming days would reveal the truth and the facts about all this. I had sought to safeguard Arab interests and deal with Arab issues through the Arab family.

Q: Do you believe that the Iraqi leadership bears part of the responsibility?

A: I believe that the people of any country are responsible for their leadership and can name those responsible. It is not up to me to say anything about this. But I can say that the Iraqi brothers did not heed my advice and subsequently I was unable to do the required service for them.

Q: Do you think that you have reached a Jordanian solution to the question of religious extremism that would avert an Algerian-like situation in Jordan?

A: Despite the difficult circumstances I do not believe that the situation in Jordan could be contrasted with any situation elsewhere. On the contrary, I believe that steps that we have taken and the path we have chosen towards democracy through the National Charter and national efforts in Jordan offer us the chance towards fulfilling our duty.

We hope also that everyone would shoulder his duty under these circumstances as we are facing numerous question marks

on numerous matters, including the Islamic movement in Jordan. I hope that God would lead us all to the right path to serve as a model for others.

Q: Do you believe that the Election Law would be amended before the date of the parliamentary elections?

A: This subject is still under discussion. It will be put to the people and the appropriate measure would be taken so as to contribute towards further enhancing democracy.

Q: So the question of amending the law would be put forth for discussion?

A: Before anything can be announced about the final decision in this regard, a full discussion will take place. Before I left Jordan for a visit abroad, I left the door open to the people of Jordan to discuss this subject. When I return I will deal with this topic and the elections date will be fixed.

Q: A year and a half ago you discussed the subject of dual Jordanian-Palestinian nationality. Do you believe that this could be one of the proposed solutions that could facilitate the peace process?

A: I put forth this idea not only in relation with the Palestinians but rather to benefit all Arab citizens. Q: We have noticed that Kuwait has excluded Jordan and the Palestinians from the process of normalisation of relations with others. What do you think of that?

A: Kuwait is free to take its own decisions. But I believe with the passage of time everything will be clear, and the Kuwaitis would reap the result of their decision and their choice.

Q: You have been king for 40 years, what stage was the most difficult for you?

A: Perhaps it is the stage through which we are living now because it is a critical and transitional period. We hope that this stage will lead us to the right path and we hope that Jordan would serve as an example for others in the Arab World.

Q: What is your advice to the Palestinians?

A: I pray to God for help for them and for ourselves. I hope God would give us patience and diligence in their victory.

Q: We want to be reassured about the conditions of your health?

Thank God, the results of the tests were very good. There is no trace of the disease. But I should follow checkups from time to time, especially in the first two years after the surgery. I must undergo a check up every six months.

COLUMN

MP wants Fergie out of U.N. role

LONDON (AP) — The Duchess of York's hopes of salvaging her public image by becoming a special U.N. envoy have been blocked by the British government and Buckingham Palace, newspapers reported Wednesday. A lawmaker said he would press the United Nations High Commission for Refugees to find someone "anybody else" — to fill the job. "I was appalled by the original announcement that she might be given this job," said Sir Nicholas Fairbairn of the governing Conservative Party. "I cannot think of anybody else I would sooner not appoint to this post than the Duchess of York," he said. The new job for the Duchess, better known as Fergie, was announced June 10 when she accepted a humanitarian award in London on behalf of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata. Seven weeks later, newspapers reported, her appointment has yet to be confirmed. The Daily Mail said the government and Buckingham Palace fear appointing the ebullient, indiscreet Fergie as goodwill ambassador "could turn into an embarrassing disaster." Today newspaper cited security concerns if Fergie were to visit trouble spots such as Bosnia or Somalia, plus palace fears she would overshadow charity work by her sister-in-law, Princess Diana. Fergie, 33, is separated from Prince Andrew, second oldest son of Queen Elizabeth II.

Casino executive's daughter kidnapped, returned unharmed

LAS VEGAS (AP) — The daughter of casino executive Steve Wynn was bound, gagged and held by two kidnappers in her own car for several hours before being freed for a \$1.5 million ransom, authorities said. Kevin Wynn, 26, was shaken but otherwise unharmed Tuesday when she was found tied up on the floor of her sports car at McCarran International Airport, four miles (six kilometres) from her home. "We have a number of leads we're checking," FBI spokesman Burke Smith said. "The important thing is that the girl is back and she's well." The kidnappers were waiting for her at her garage when she came home Monday night. They threw her in her car and sped away, said a law enforcement source speaking on condition of anonymity. The kidnappers contacted Wynn, chairman of Mirage Resorts Inc., and he paid the \$1.5 million at an undisclosed location, the source said. A Mirage spokeswoman, Jenn Michaels, would not comment on the ransom. Wynn and his wife, Elaine, were in seclusion Tuesday along with children Kevin and Gillian, Stan Hunter, the Wynn's attorney, said they had no comment. Mirage Resorts Inc. owns the Mirage Hotel and Casino on the Las Vegas strip and the Golden Nugget Resorts in Las Vegas and Laughlin, Nev. Ms. Wynn works in the marketing department at the Mirage.

U.S. health official warns of doctor glut

WASHINGTON (APF) — A top U.S. health official said that there were too many doctors in the United States and noted a dramatic rise in the number of foreign-trained doctors doing their residencies here. "We have too many (physicians), that's why we need to decrease the total number of residencies," said Philip Lee, the new assistant secretary for health at the Department of Health and Human Services. The estimated 80,000 U.S. residencies exceed the number of U.S. graduates by about 35 per cent according to Mr. Lee, who added that lawmakers have proposed allowing the number of residencies to exceed the number of U.S. graduates by only 10 per cent. Lee also said that among the some 600,000 physicians in the United States, specialists outnumbered generalists by more than two-to-one and that the gap was widening. The White House is considering changes in federal subsidies for medical education to rectify the imbalance.

Siamese twins separated, but one doomed to die

LEXINGTON, Kentucky (APF) — A pair of two-month-old Siamese twins joined at the back were separated after a 9-1/2-hour operation, but one was doomed to die as only the fittest of them could use the kidney they had shared, surgeons said. Tiffany Lynn Brenna Lewis was due in a matter of days. She was too weak to survive a kidney transplant and had other serious medical problems.